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NEWS ANALYSIS

THE EXERS

The lobbyists are flexing on Labour

SECTION TWO

INDECENT EXPOSURE?

Is one woman's snapshot another man's pornography?



Nation stares into its divided soul as killer 'rejoices' but government pledges that the Middle East peace process will continue

Rabin killing throws Israel into turmoil

PATRICK COCKBURN
Jerusalem

Israel buries Yitzhak Rabin today, briefly united by the shock of his death but horrified by the depth of the divisions within Israeli society revealed by his assassination.

As Mr Rabin's coffin lay outside the Israeli parliament yesterday, tens of thousands of Israelis filed past to pay their last respects. Utterly unrepentant, Yigal Amir, his 27-year-old assassin, said he had also intended to kill Shimon Peres, the Foreign Minister, who is now the acting prime minister. He said he "received instructions from God to kill Prime Minister Rabin."

Police believe the assassination was probably the work of Amir acting alone, but are unravelling his contacts among the extreme groups of the Israeli religious right. Moshe Shahal, the Police Minister, said the assassin made two previous attempts to get close enough to the Prime Minister to kill him before he finally succeeded at the end of the peace rally in Tel Aviv on Saturday night.

Quite apart from political shock-waves of Mr Rabin's death - throwing the peace process into confusion - Israel must now stare into a psychological and spiritual abyss that they had long preferred to ignore. Mr Rabin's death was the first ever murder of an Israeli leader by an Israeli. Whether or not Amir acted alone, Israel can no longer disregard the fact that it has an implacable, fundamentalist, and anti-democratic force in its midst, which is not foreign, but home-grown.

President Bill Clinton and John Major will be joined many other leaders at the state funeral today, including President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, making his first visit to Israel, King Hussein of Jordan, and Chancellor Helmut Kohl of Germany. Yasser Arafat, the PLO leader, has decided not to come on the

grounds that his presence might be considered provocative.

Israelis are astonished that the assassin was able to get so close to Mr Rabin despite the presence of 700 security men. There is sure to be a serious row over the failure of security.

The police say that Mr Rabin refused to wear a bullet-proof vest which might have saved him.

The reasons for the failure of security appear to be that the security men were trained to expect and prevent attacks by Palestinians. Despite repeated threats against Mr Rabin and his

against the right does not last. As a life-long hardliner, Mr Rabin had the credentials to push the peace process, which Mr Peres, long regarded as a moderate, arguably does not.

The 73-year-old Mr Rabin spent 27 years in the Israeli army and was chief-of-staff during Israel's biggest military victory in the Six Day war in 1967. His political career, which led to him becoming prime minister twice, was rooted in his status as Israel's leading military hero.

Many of those waiting to file past his coffin yesterday were religious Jews wearing skullcaps wanting to demonstrate their disapproval of the killing. "My reaction was total embarrassment because I am a religious Jew and I wear a *kippa* (skullcap) and now I know when I walk down the street people are going to look at me like I am a murderer," said Alon Cohen, originally from the United States.

Amir, 27, the assassin, was a law student at Bar-Ilan, a religious university outside Tel Aviv. The son of immigrants from Yemen he had been brought up attending religious schools and had been involved in agitation in favour of the West Bank settlers. He has made no attempt to deny the charge and signed a five-page confession. When told Mr Rabin had died, he said he was happy.

An astonishing aspect of the assassination is that it had been often predicted this year without anybody believing that it could really happen. Settlers near Hebron and other centres of extremism had made clear that they saw Mr Rabin's government as giving up the land which God had given to Israel. They had already proved their potential for violence when Baruch Goldstein killed 29 Palestinians as they worshipped in a mosque last year.

Amir told police interrogators that he believed that it was permissible "to kill anybody who was giving up the land of Israel".

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RABIN ASSASSINATION

World leaders vow to keep peace on track

RUPERT CORNWELL
Washington
and DONALD MACINTYRE

President Bill Clinton and the Prime Minister, John Major, were among world leaders heading to Israel last night to attend Yitzhak Rabin's funeral, with Mr Clinton underlining his determination that the loss of "a martyr for his nation's peace" would not deflect the US from its goal of securing a lasting peace in the Middle East.

As the President left, administration officials emphasised that US policy would not change, even though – as former president Jimmy Carter, the architect of the 1978 Camp David accord, put it – the world might have to be "patient" as Israel adjusted to the horror of a shattering of terrorism mounted, not by Arabs, but from within.

The Prime Minister, who will be accompanied by Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, said in terms that were reflected across the political spectrum in Westminster that the best memorial for Rabin would be achievement of the Middle East peace settlement for which he had given his life. Mr Major expressed his great shock and sorrow at Rabin's death, describing him as "a personal friend whom I much admired".

The Queen, who is in New Zealand for the Commonwealth conference and was due to be very shocked by news of the assassination, sent a message of condolence to Israel's President Ezer Weizman, and will be represented by the Prince of Wales at the funeral. Both the Opposition leader, Tony Blair, and Paddy Ashdown, leader of the Liberal Democrats, will also attend.

Mr Rifkind, who is going ahead with a visit to the Middle East which was to have included a meeting with Rabin on Wednesday, told BBC Radio: "I believe the peace process itself is irreversible and will go forward." He added: "That is likely to be even more the view of the Israeli government and the Israeli public. I'm sure there will be a great coming together of people in Israel. But it's difficult to exaggerate the significance of the loss of Mr Rabin as an individual, because he commanded such widespread respect and widespread authority."

Mr Blair said he believed the momentum behind the peace process was "unstoppable". Mr Ashdown declared: "It is vital that everyone now acts to keep the peace process on track."

For US policymakers who had worked with Rabin on and off for almost 30 years, the impact was deeply personal as well as political. "I admired him and I loved him very much," Mr Clinton said shortly after the is-

raeli Prime Minister's death had been confirmed, lamenting the loss of "one of the world's greatest men". Peace must be, the President declared, "and peace will be Mr Rabin's lasting legacy".

The Secretary of State, Warren Christopher, who in less than three years has paid 13 visits to the Middle East in search of the peace agreement he seeks as the seal on his long diplomatic career, was said by aides to be "broken" by the news.

Demonstrating the esteem in which Rabin was held, Mr Clinton will be accompanied by his wife, Hillary, former presidents Carter and George Bush, and an official delegation including Mr Christopher, Bob Dole, the Senate majority leader and Newt Gingrich, the House Speaker, as well as leaders of the Democratic minority in Congress.

Behind its insistence, however, that the peace process was irreversible and would continue, the White House was urgently trying to gauge the damage done. Some drew heart that Rabin's successor – for the time being, at least – is his Foreign Minister, Shimon Peres. Unspoken too was relief that Arab extremists were not responsible.

But, they admit, Mr Peres lacks the credentials of Rabin, and cannot provide the cover extended by Rabin's military background and his well-known initial scepticism about peace.



Black day: Israelis waving a black flag as the convoy escorting Yitzhak Rabin's body passes near the town of Mavaseret on the Tel Aviv-Jerusalem highway yesterday

Photograph: Jerome Delay/AP

British Jews united in anger and sorrow

JOJO MOYES

BRITISH REACTION

Outside the Israeli embassy in Kensington the message attached to a simple wreath of white lilies displayed the grief of Britain's Jewish community. "I would have taken his place in a second if I could," it read. "No doubt, out of this number depth of Jewish history, will emerge Israel's finest hour."

Religious leaders and Israel's ambassador to London insisted the Middle East peace process would not be derailed by the killing. The Chief Rabbi, Dr Jonathan Sacks, said: "Peace is still a long way away but the dedication and commitment to it on the part of the Jewish community is undiminished. The process will go on."

"Yitzhak Rabin will, in our Jewish phrase, be one whose memory will stand as a blessing

and the cause for which he dedicated his life will continue and is our consolation."

Dr Sacks, speaking on BBC Radio, said the assassination was the work of an "unbalanced" assassin and had no religious justification. He said a debate inside Israel in the aftermath of Rabin's murder was imperative. "We must talk this out. We cannot fight it out." Dr Sacks added: "He was a courageous man, bold in war, bold in peace and we will miss him."

According to police stationed outside the embassy, where scaffolding and tarpaulin acted as a reminder of last year's bombing, more than 70 people had come throughout the day to pay their respects. Today at noon the embassy will open a book of condolence.

"Yitzhak Rabin will, in our Jewish phrase, be one whose memory will stand as a blessing

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THEY SHOULD HAVE.
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Arabs who want peace fear genie as evil as the Islamist extremists

Robert Fisk, Middle East Correspondent, wonders when the world will admit that Israel has its own 'terrorist' problem



Anti-Israel demonstrators in Sidon, south Lebanon, gloating over Yitzhak Rabin's death

Photograph: AP

tlements which were so close to Mr Amir's heart. Psychologically, it seems to Arabs, they are being blamed for a murder that has its roots in uncontrolled Zionism. And who could blame them for thinking this when the BBC World Service noted that the Arab states opposed to the peace process had failed to condemn Rabin's murder – without mentioning that the killer was an Israeli.

The immature delight expressed by Iran and others at Rabin's death should not conceal the real problems of Israel's internal divisions, which President Mubarak, for one, has privately raised with the Americans on several occasions.

The burning tyres around

the Beirut refugee camps, the rocket-propelled grenades fired into the sky over the Sidon camps by those Palestinians

opposed to the PLO-Israeli

peace, the car-loads of Hizbullah

settlers driving with flags

through Beirut; all these reflect

despair, distrust and contempt in equal measure.

As the man who launched the

bombardment of southern Lebanon in 1993, killing 120 civilians and putting 300,000 refugees on

the road in retaliation for the

murder of seven Israeli occupation

soldiers, Yitzhak Rabin was

scarcely going to be regarded

as the man of peace whom

CNN spent so much time lauding yesterday.

But there were other lessons

to be learned in the Arab world.

"What Rabin's murder means

is that Israel is just another Mid-

dle Eastern country, just like the

Arabs – just like us," a

Lebanese figure close to the

pro-Iranian Hizbullah said here

yesterday. "An Egyptian soldier

killed President Sadat because

he didn't like the peace with Is-

rael. Now an Israeli [reserve] soldier kills Rabin because he doesn't like peace with the Arabs. Israel has become a Middle Eastern society. Their leaders are in future going to be as frightened for their lives as our leaders. They too have a conflict between their secularists and their fundamentalists – just like the Arab societies. Only they won't admit it."

The same man recalled that last week, Sayed Hassan Nasrallah, the Hizbullah leader, the widow of the assassinated Iranian leader Fathi Shatik, and Shatik's successor, Ramadan Shatik, all made personal threats against Rabin. "Now just imagine that an Arab had killed Arafat. We would all believe that Israel was behind Arafat's killing. Yet the moment we heard that Rabin had been killed by a Jew, none of us thought that the Jew was working for Islamic jihad. We know very well how violent the settler society is in Israel. We didn't think for a moment that the Jew had done it on our behalf."

Notwithstanding the public sorrow of King Hussein and President Mubarak and Yasser Arafat, there was silence from Damascus. Not a word came from the palace of President Hafez al-Assad (and thus, not surprisingly, not a peep came from the Lebanese prime minister, Rafiq Hariri).

Time, for the Arabs, is now frozen. And despite all the talk about rededication to peace, the whole "process" of Arab-Is-

rael rapprochement is now in abeyance.

If Rabin, the old warrior

could not tame the settlers,

the Arabs are now asking, how

can the distinctly unilitary

figure of Shimon Peres? Put

more simply, what price peace?

RABIN ASSASSINATION



Shimon Peres and Yitzhak Rabin addressing supporters at a rally for peace in Tel Aviv. Shortly afterwards the killer Yigal Amir (centre) shot the prime minister as he returned to his car, before being apprehended by police (right)



Solitary, religious student was 'told by God' to kill

PATRICK COCKBURN
Jerusalem

Seconds after he had fired his .22 pistol at Yitzhak Rabin, the Israeli Prime Minister, the slight, dark-haired figure of Yigal Amir was caught by the television camera as he was pushed up against a wall by the Israeli police, still clutching the gun. He later explained quietly in his five-page confession that he

THE KILLER

had "received instructions from God to kill Prime Minister Rabin." When police told him Rabin was dead he simply said: "I'm satisfied."

The 27-year-old third-year law student at Bar-Ilan university admitted he had tried to kill Rabin twice before but had not been able to get close enough.

On Saturday night he

emerged from a passageway behind the podium just as the Prime Minister returned to his armoured-plated car, and shot Rabin at almost point-blank range.

He said he had planned to shoot Shimon Peres, the Foreign Minister, if he had accompanied Rabin.

Mr Amir's political and religious background is typical of the right-wing extremists in Israeli politics. Of Yemenite ori-

gin, he grew up in a large family with seven brothers and sisters in Herzliya, north of Tel Aviv. His father was religious and his mother taught in a kindergarten. He went to a religious school and then to a yeshiva (religious college) in Ashdod. He was conscripted into the army and served in the Golani brigade. On leaving the army he went to Bar-Ilan.

The university is considered conservative and right wing

and is favoured by religious, but not necessarily fanatical, students from Tel Aviv. According to other students, he belonged to a religious group and had shadowy associations with Kach and Eyal, two of the most extreme right-wing and anti-Arab parties. Other students say he would try to recruit them to spend weekends in the West Bank with settlers.

Mr Amir's decision to kill Rabin seems to have been taken

almost a year ago. In January he waited for him at Yad Vashem, the memorial in Jerusalem to the victims of the Holocaust. But the explosion of a bomb planted by Islamic Jihad, the militant Muslim group, which killed 21 soldiers at Beir Lida, led the Prime Minister to postpone his visit.

"He would say: 'We have to stick it to Rabin and his government,'" a fellow student said. Other students said he was

solitary. Avner Goldschmidt, a makeshift encampment erected by settlers on the disputed West Bank hilltop. "Most of the people at the July rally were fairly calm, but Mr Amir's behaviour was extreme, overtly hostile, both to the police and to the press," said a Reuters television cameraman, Eli Bereznick, who covered the incident.

Television news footage of the settler demonstration on 31 July shows Mr Amir fighting police as they ejected him from the

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Right tries to play down link to extremists

PATRICK COCKBURN
Jerusalem

Israeli right-wingers were running for cover yesterday, fearing political oblivion if the public becomes convinced that the venom of their attacks on Yitzhak Rabin, the Israeli prime minister, led to his assassination.

"There is no compromising with Messianic politics," says Professor Yaron Ezrahi of the Hebrew University, denouncing the use of violence by religious idealists as a threat to Israeli democracy. He points out that at a recent rally in Jerusalem members of Likud silenced Rabin by cutting off his microphone. Now an assassin has silenced him for good.

Parallels like this are exactly what Likud does not want to hear. Over the last year settler groups had made repeated threats of violence if the Oslo agreement went ahead. Most of these were directed against Palestinians and the government was tolerant. But in recent months it was Rabin and Shimon Peres, the Foreign Minister, who were denounced.

Earlier this year Ari Rath, a former editor of the *Jerusalem Post*, said that he was worried not just by the fact that the right put up notices showing Rabin as a Nazi but that nobody bothered to take them down.

The Labour party and the government seemed unconcerned by the growing atmosphere of violence.



Widow's grief: Yitzhak Rabin's wife, Leah, arriving at the Knesset yesterday

Photograph: Yannis Behrakis

and secular Jews. Israel was established as a Jewish state, but there were continued disputes about what this meant. Israelis tend to be much more conscious of this friction than the outside world which saw Israeli nationalism as being little different from anywhere else.

The most significant development over the next few weeks will be the degree of the split between the religious and the secular right. Mr Netanyahu will

have difficulty in straddling the two as he has done in the past and will distance himself from the settlers and other far right factions.

Liberal and secular Israelis hope that the trauma of the assassination will permanently weaken the religious and nationalist right.

Mr Peres will try to ensure that it does, but, such is their strength, it is unlikely that he can permanently succeed.

Damascus remains key to Middle East settlement

MICHAEL SHERIDAN
Diplomatic Editor

Three questions face the Middle East this week in the aftermath of the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin. Will Israel's left-of-centre government retain its grip on power until the general election due in November next year? Can Shimon Peres, named as acting Prime Minister, forge a domestic base strong enough to conduct Israel's last crucial set of negotiations with Syria? And does the violent shock of the assassination make it more or less likely that Syria itself will edge closer to a settlement?

The key figure needed for a Peres government to succeed in that policy will be the former army chief of staff, Ehud Barak, at present Minister of the Interior, perhaps the only figure capable of providing Israeli voters with the cautious reassurance that was Rabin's trademark.

Mr Barak has already held confidential talks at top level with Syrian staff officers and knows the military geography of the Golan Heights inside out. He is on close terms with the American negotiating team. His presence in the cabinet – perhaps as defence minister – means that Mr Peres could indeed find the domestic cohesion necessary to conclude a deal.

The effects on Syria itself are likely to be more psychological than tangible in character. President Hafez al-Assad was

Rabin's foe in the 1967 war – he held office as Syria's minister of defence while Rabin was Israeli chief of staff. To President Assad, the visit of each envoy since Henry Kissinger 22 years ago has served to shift a small piece on the chessboard, each move serving his endgame of a liberated Golan Heights; thus, perhaps, preserving the stability of his own regime even after his demise. Israelis often talk about the life-and-death decisions over their own security: these are matters of life and death in the stalled talks with Syria.

Yesterday, diplomats closely engaged in the peace negotiations believed Mr Peres would pursue and perhaps even accelerate talks with Damascus, knowing that under Israeli law he may now lead a transitional government with a 61-59 Knesset.

Damascus, too. The mutual suspicion and caution of Assad and Rabin reinforced the barriers to a settlement.

Rabin had transformed conventional political psychology elsewhere in the Middle East.



Moved to tears: President Clinton mourns for Rabin

The atmospheric change was positively seismic," recalled James Baker, then US Secretary of State. In his recent memoirs, Mr Baker recounts Rabin's strategic decision to change Israeli policy, sacrificing the territorial aspirations of Jewish zealots in exchange for peace treaties with the Arab world. "I intend to persevere," Rabin told Mr Baker, "for the sake of 3.9 million Israeli Jews and a

million Israeli Arabs who should not have to mortgage their future for 100,000 settlers in the territories."

The fruits of Rabin's policy came through the Oslo accords with the Palestinians and a full peace treaty with Jordan. Together with the 1978 Camp David accords with Egypt, they secured for Israel the end of belligerency on all but its slender northern frontiers.

Damascus thus remains the key: "No war without Egypt, no peace without Syria" said Mr Kissinger. Only last week the Syrian press gave proof that official rhetoric has regressed to the Kissinger era. "Israel has pursued the path of terrorism, murder and massacres since its establishment," said the daily newspaper *Tishrin*, "Israel rejects the return of land and sets conditions under the pretext of peace." The ruling-party daily, *Al-Baath*, said: "The truth is that the real dispute is between Israel and the United Nations as long as Israel rejects the UN resolutions while Syria sticks to them." Mr Peres, interviewed before the assassination, said he believed Syria still wanted to keep their negotiating options open. He made clear his belief that Israel should press on with talks despite next year's election.

"In my view winning peace is no less important than winning elections," said Mr Peres, "we were put in office for a four-year term and we are duty bound to make full use of every minute, to serve the nation in matters of peace and security. There is no room for hesitation."

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NOLAN DEBATE

Sleaze or integrity? Rebels hold the key



Richard Body, Edwin Currie, Peter Thurnham, Sir Teddy Taylor, Richard Shepherd, David Whelan, Hugh Dylan, Patrick Donahoe, Tony Blair, Alan Johnson, and Peter Mandelson.

Twelve of the MPs in vital vote... and amendments which will decide the issue

Advocacy ban

Select Committee: "No Member... shall in consideration of any... fee, payment, reward or benefit in kind... advocate or initiate any cause or matter on behalf of any outside body or individual or urge any other Member... including Ministers, to do so by means of any speech, Question, Motion... Bill or amendment."

Amendments:

Dr Tony Wright (Lab): add "or by any other means, either formal or informal".
Dale Campbell-Savours (Lab): add "[or] delegation... or correspondence... where the subject to be discussed affects only the body in which he or she has a paid interest".

Nolan Committee said immediate ban was "impracticable" and that further thought was needed before a decision on whether... a ban was... appropriate".

Earnings disclosure

Select Committee: that MPs should register with the new Parliamentary Commissioner (Sir Gordon Downey) details of outside contracts "which involves the provision of services in his capacity as an MP... excluding the amount of any fee or benefit".
Amendments:

Labour, Liberal Democrat, SNP front benches: delete from "excluding" and insert "including the fees and benefits payable in bands of up to £1,000, £1,000-£5,000, £5,000-£10,000 and thereafter in bands of £5,000".
Peter Thurnham, Sir Teddy Taylor, Patrick Donahoe also supported by David Whelan: delete from "excluding" and insert "and to provide full details of financial benefits arising directly from positions relating to the promotion of particular interests concerning Parliamentary business and... that the new amendment be implemented after the next general election".

Nolan Committee recommended earnings disclosure for "full understanding of the nature of the service expected by a business or consultancy of an MP".

MPs as paid advisers to multi-client lobbying firms

Select Committee: "No member shall enter into an agreement for the provision of services... with any... organisation engaged in lobbying or public relations on behalf of more than one client".

Nolan Committee: "that, after a parliamentary adviser is to multi-client firms... we may set up a mechanism for consultancy agreements between MPs and public relations on lobbying firms which are themselves acting as advisers and advocates for a number of clients in areas of miscellaneous and often undisclosed interests".

The following is a simplified version of the most important of the 28 amendments submitted for the debate.

As the Commons prepares for a night of high drama, the Government faces a revolt from a dozen backbenchers.

Don Macintyre reports

Days of political high drama do not come much more dramatic than the Tuesday afternoon just over a year ago when John Major announced that he was setting up an inquiry under Lord Nolan into standards in public life. The 25 October announcement came on the same day as Mr Major sacked his trade minister Neil Hamilton, who admitted that, as a back-bench MP, he had taken an undisclosed free stay in the Paris Ritz from Mohammed al Fayed, the boss of Harrods.

It was the cumulative effect of the allegations – denied by Mr Hamilton but not, in the end, by Tim Smith, Graham Riddick or David Tredinnick – that as back-bench MPs they had accepted offers of cash for asking parliamentary questions, that finally convinced John Major the weekend before his announcement that nothing short of a wide-ranging enquiry under a leading judge would do.

It is that issue – how to deal with the money-making temptations available to ordinary MPs – that has to be resolved in what promises to be another Commons drama tonight, with the Government facing a revolt by more than a dozen of its backbenchers.

When Nolan reported in May, it was clear that MPs should continue to be allowed outside interests. But it also pointed out how those interests had changed over the years. A generation ago many MPs had other jobs, as farmers, or bona

Both sides, as they seek to maximise their votes today, are guilty of a little myth-making

ide businessmen or solicitors. But now, 30 per cent of all MPs had consultancies paying them for knowledge and access because they sat in Parliament.

There was, moreover, another problem. A governing 1947 Commons resolution had made it clear that an MP could not enter into any contract with a firm which required him to advocate its interests in the Commons. But the subsequent Register of Members' Interests, by requiring MPs to register interests "which might reasonably be thought by others to influence his or her actions speeches or votes" seemed to assume that MPs could be expected to pursue their clients' interests in the Commons provided they registered them properly.

Arguing that this discrepancy was "wholly unsatisfactory", the Nolan report proposed that the 1947 resolution should be clearly restated. It considered going further than the 1947 resolution by banning advocacy altogether, but rejected this as "impracticable", at least in the short term. The passage in which the committee explains the reasons for this appears to argue that MPs would then have to end many of their outside contracts in order to be free to speak and vote on many issues with which they were personally and genuinely concerned.

The report could also severely hamper union-sponsored MPs (though Labour plans to switch union cash from MPs to



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Greenpeace prunes UK branch

NICHOLAS SCHOON
Environment Correspondent

Greenpeace UK has decided to cut one-fifth of its salaried staff and turn thousands of its local fund-raising volunteers into trained campaigners.

The changes which affect every part of the organisation were approved by Greenpeace UK's board last week. Executive director Lord Peter Melchett, the driving force behind the shake-up, said it was needed to ensure Greenpeace remained "a thorn in the flesh" of those who wrecked the environment.

The job cuts, which have

been under intensive discussion for two months, have damaged morale. "People are anxious about their own jobs, or sad that friends are leaving," Eton and Cambridge-educated Lord Melchett, said.

The number of salaried staff will fall from 83 to 65, but the actual number of redundancies is likely to be only about 10 because there were already several vacancies.

Until now, Greenpeace UK's 230 local groups have been heavily involved in fundraising through activities such as street and door-to-door collections, sponsored walks and selling Greenpeace merchandise.

They will be expected to do much less of that in future and this will cost the organisation £200,000 a year in lost revenue. Instead, the board wants them to take part in mass protest actions, such as the recent demonstration outside Chequers when John Major met the French President, Jacques Chirac.

The international environmental pressure group has a tradition of using small numbers of commissioned, modestly-paid activists for its potentially dangerous protest actions. They need special skills, such as flying helicopters, piloting inflatables and mountaineering up sheer structures.

At head office in Islington, north London, the aim is to keep the annual budget at just over £5m a year. Cuts in jobs and administration will save £600,000 a year. An extra £200,000 will be devoted to campaigning and £100,000 more spent on building up cash reserves.

The budget for recruiting new supporters through advertising and mailing campaigns is going up by £100,000 a year. Greenpeace said it now has 350,000 supporters - people who have given money in the past 18 months - compared to about 400,000 at its peak a few years ago.

"We've been living off the gains which came with our very rapid growth in the late 1980s," Lord Melchett said. "It's time to take off in new directions, to be more imaginative and do the unexpected."

He said the Brent Spar campaign of the summer had so far had no overall impact on donations and support for Greenpeace UK. A one-off appeal immediately after Shell backed down and abandoned plans to dump the giant oil storage buoy at sea did, however, raise about £100,000.

In Britain, the organisation will be investing more in campaigning for solutions to envi-



Melchett: Still in charge

ronmental problems. It is particularly keen on solar energy.

One thing that will remain constant is Lord Melchett himself. After running the UK organisation for six years he is Greenpeace's longest serving executive director among the 30 nations where it has offices.

IN BRIEF

Search for killer after car shooting

Police are hunting a gunman who shot a man three times at point-blank range as he got out of his car. Derek Palmer, in his forties, of Feltham, Middlesex, died after being hit twice in the head and once in the heart by a gunman wearing a crash helmet as he fetched a coat from his car in Kilburn, north London, on Saturday evening. Police are keeping an "open mind" about the motive.

Schools initiative

David Blunkett, Labour's education spokesman, will today try to steal a march on the Government by inviting councils to pilot schemes for raising standards in poor schools by sack- ing the head, weak teachers and replacing some governors.

Priest resigns

A Presbyterian minister at the centre of an investigation into the import of pornographic videos has resigned. The Rev David Templeton, of Trinity Church in Greyabbey, Co Down, had been on sick leave following the allegations.

Caine tribute

Ken Caine, husband of the comedienne Marlene Caine, thanked fans for their support during her fight against cancer. Ms Caine, 50, died on Saturday, a day after discharging herself from hospital following a relapse.

Lottery winners

Three ticket-holders won a share in Saturday's National Lottery jackpot of £8,395,869. They matched the winning numbers of 6, 14, 18, 27, 44 and 48, reaping £2,798,623 each. The bonus number was 1.

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Beatlemania revival: Collectors devour the tacky and trivial as band survivors attack use of songs in commercials

Fans weep over plastic guitars

DAVID LISTER
Arts Correspondent

It is the most limited limited edition in the world. In 1958 The Quarry Men, an embryonic pop band later to be The Beatles, made an acetate - a demo recording - of a song called "In Spite Of All The Danger". There is just one copy. If you have it, polish it. Its estimated value now is £100,000.

That song, the only one written by Paul McCartney and George Harrison, will feature on the CD released later this month to accompany *The Beatles Anthology* television series.

Beatles memorabilia has always commanded high prices. But the renewed interest in the group is reinforcing interest in the tackiest ephemera.

Records, as opposed to ephemera, are also being sought by collectors. Frustratingly, many items are items that were common at the time and discarded by fans who did not anticipate a Beatles revival.

For example, the last Beatles album released was the box set of *Let It Be* in 1970. The box containing album and booklet was held in place by a cardboard tray and was so hard to open that nearly every copy got ripped or thrown away. If yours did not, it now fetches £150. The

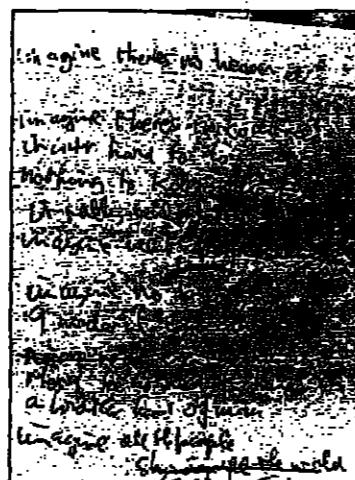
original of their first album, *Please Please Me* in 1963, rates £150 for the mono version, and £750 for the stereo.

Ephemera continues to sell, of course. A stud from the Abbey Road zebra crossing sold this year for £380.

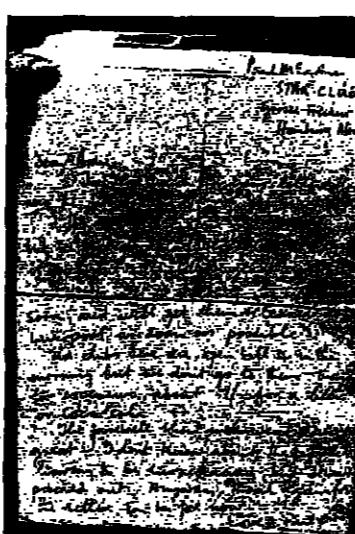
With interest in the group again reaching near manic proportions, some of the wanted ads for Beatles memorabilia have a mid-Sixties look. One collector is offering £700 for any set of Beatles autographs - despite the fact that the group often had their road managers take their autographs, £1,000 for Beatles posters; and £10,000 for an original manuscript of Lennon and McCartney lyrics.

Tracks, in Chorley, Lancashire, is the country's biggest specialist dealer in Beatles memorabilia, selling mainly in America and Japan. Paul Wane, the proprietor, said: "People went through the Sixties, got married, and put all their Beatles things up in the attic. There's an awful lot of the really tacky bric-a-brac that came out in the Sixties, but there's a huge market. A plastic Beatles guitar will now fetch £300."

However, Mr Wane's prize possession is a lyric to what he describes as a "truly terrible" unpublished song by John Lennon, on offer for £60,000.



Collectables: Above, Lennon's lyrics to 'Imagine' on the back of a hotel bill; (below) a letter from McCartney in Hamburg and (right) a 1967 'Time' cover



Jackson 'cheapens our songs'

The three remaining Beatles yesterday attacked superstar singer Michael Jackson for "cheapening" their work.

Jackson bought the rights to the Beatles' music for £50m and has allowed some songs to be used in television commercials.

George Harrison warned: "Unless we do something about it, every Beatles song is going to end up advertising bras and pork pies."

Paul McCartney said Jackson - with whom he recorded two singles in the 1980s, "Say Say" and "The Girl Is Mine" - had "cheapened" the songs.

Their comments came just ahead of the release of the *The Beatles Anthology* album later this month, which will feature the first new tracks for 25 years.

The Beatles spoke of the "magic" of recording new tracks together again. "Free As A Bird" and "Real Love" were recorded by Paul McCartney, Ringo Starr and George Harrison from tapes started by the fourth Beatle, John Lennon, who was murdered in 1980.

But on the two tracks, and thanks to multi-track recording equipment, Lennon's voice joins his old friends in the Abbey Road studio. McCartney told *Elle* magazine: "It was all very strange and very magical."

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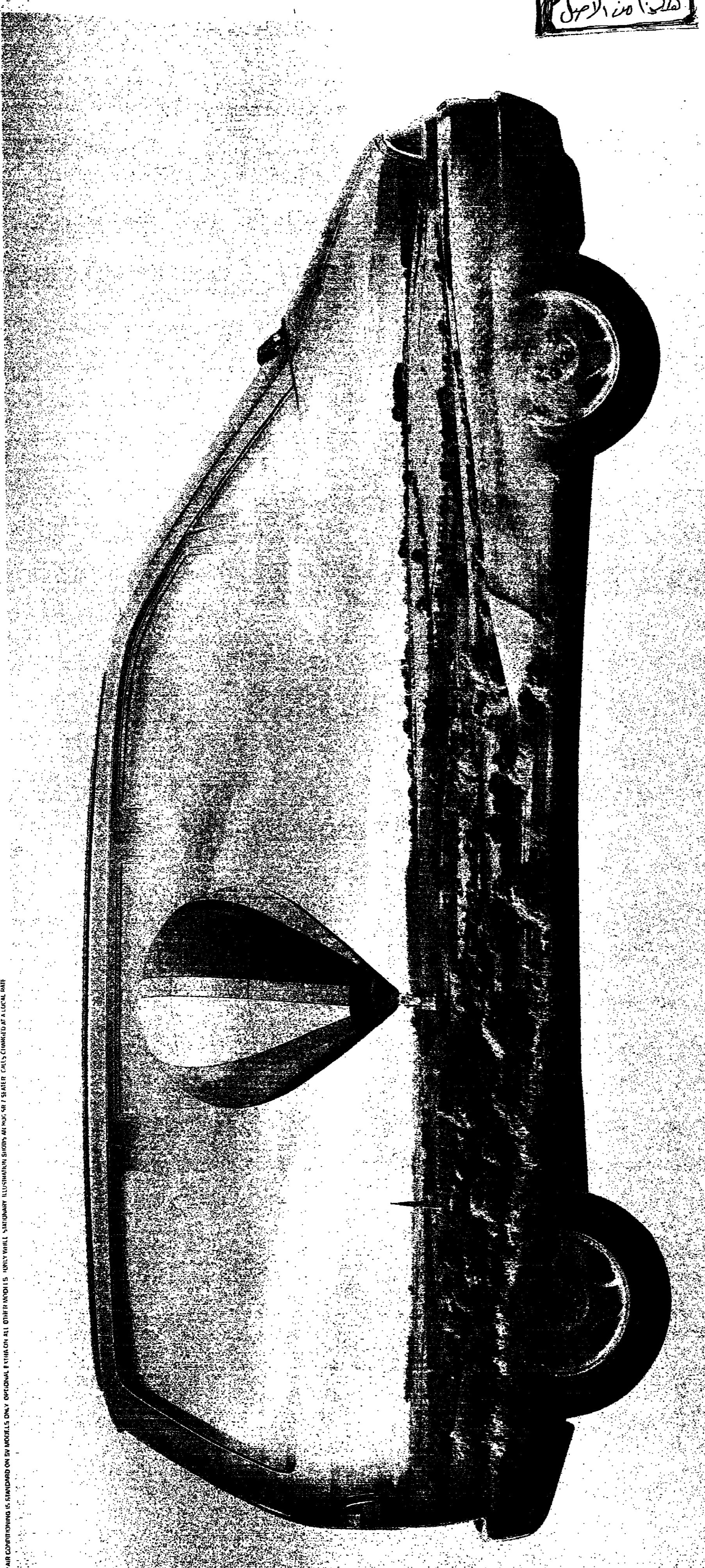
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Backing a loser: Profits have been hit as people spend their money on lottery tickets, rather than horses

Photograph: David Rose

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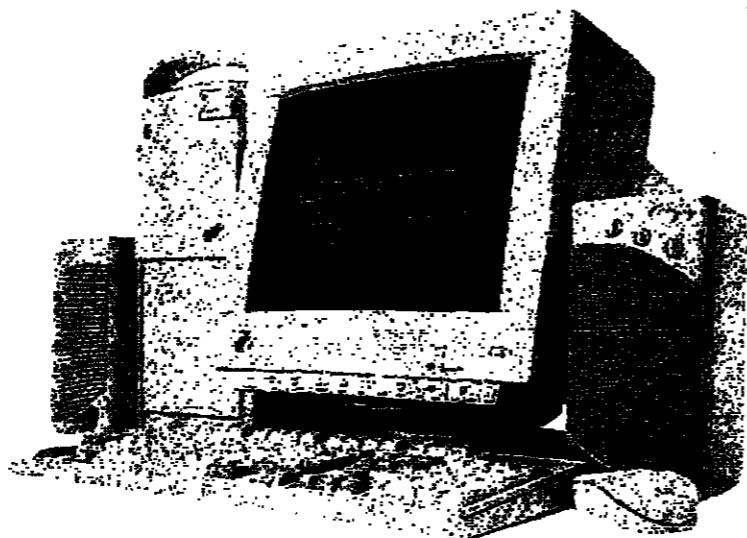
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Bookies warn they may not last the course

GLENDA COOPER

As the National Lottery approaches its first birthday, bookmakers claim that unless the Government takes rapid action they will be forced out of business.

On Friday, the independent bookmakers Stanley Leisure announced that half-year profits were "significantly below" that achieved for the comparable half year in 1994-95. Three days earlier, Vernons Pools had announced 150 redundancies. Both companies blamed the National Lottery.

racing and Sunday racing. So we're making less per meeting."

If a shop does not open on a Sunday, the punter will take his bet - and return to claim his winnings - elsewhere. So although most shops will only get 40 per cent of customers they would open on a weekday, they are too scared of losing further custom not to open.

But it would be wrong to blame all retail ills on the lottery, according to Ray Stone, assistant director of the Henley Centre. In March the centre brought out a report, *Lottery Fallout*, which looked at the effect of lottery spending last December and January.

At that time, some of the 10,000 shops and garages with lottery terminals had seen sales rise by as much as 20 per cent since November 1994. Food stores had doubled sales at their tobacco counters.

The report also warned that pubs and restaurants were likely to see trade fall, or at least shift around, as so many people were staying home later to watch the draw. It suggested that cinemas might have to reschedule Saturday evening shows, or even announce the draw themselves.

However, Mr Stone said that these findings were preliminary and some were out of date six months on. *Lottery Fallout 2*, a report which looks at the first full year, will be published at the end of November.

"People should be asking different questions," he said. "It is not all the National Lottery. We should look at what else has made a difference. For instance, the hot weather this summer made people spend a lot more on drinks."

Mr Bruce disagrees. He says he will hang on until the Budget in just over three weeks time to see if the cut in betting tax which would create a "level playing field" appears. "But we can't hang on much longer."

Howard to extend electronic tagging as trial founders

JASON BENNETTO
Crime Correspondent

for breaching their orders. The Home Office hopes that an extension will allow further people to be tagged which will enable a proper assessment of the system.

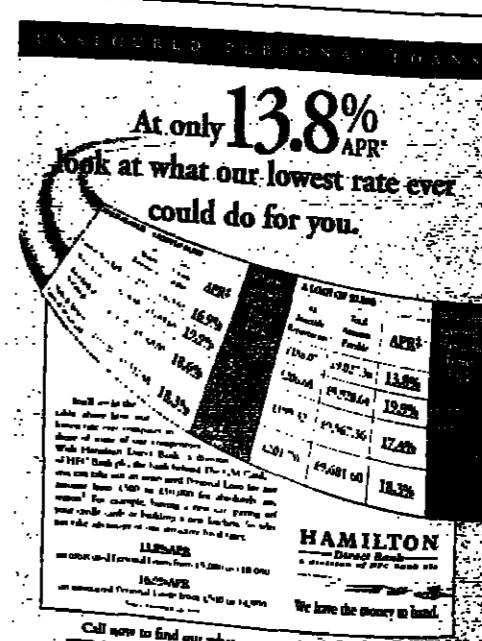
The National Association of Probation Officers claims that Home Office officials have been lobbying magistrates to use more tags.

It estimates that 7,500 sentence reports have been produced since the trial began and that in only 55 cases have magistrates asked whether tagging was appropriate.

A meeting between Home Office officials, probation managers and magistrates will take place this week to discuss the trials. In tests in 1989 only 49 offenders were tagged out of a hopeful 140.

Harry Fletcher of the probation officers' association said any extension of the trial would be evidence that the system was on its last legs.

The Home Office did not deny that the trials were about to be extended three months. It said an announcement would be made later this week.



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JULY 1995

news

Vice squads in call for brothels to be legalised

JASON BENNETTO
Crime Correspondent

A third of police vice squads want brothels to be legalised, because officers believe they are fighting a losing battle against prostitution, a new study reveals today.

In addition, almost all the vice-squad officers questioned in England and Wales believe the current anti-prostitution laws are outdated, cumbersome and difficult to implement.

There is also widespread frustration at what officers believe is extremely weak legislation and soft penalties against kerb-crawlers.

The report shows that one in 10 officers thinks street prostitution should be legalised as well. The findings come in a study by the Centre of Criminology, Middlesex University. About 30 of the country's 40 vice squads took part in the research, which found widespread variation in the treatment of prostitutes, pimps and kerb-crawlers.

Many officers admit their work against street prostitutes is practically a waste of time and is carried out to appease complaining residents. However, the report found that the number of street prostitutes was decreasing.

According to the report, there are increasingly tolerant attitudes towards prostitutes who ply their trade in saunas, massage parlours, brothels and strip bars. Officers often stated that their main priorities were to "clean up the streets - not to police sex". And they considered that off-street prostitute posed few law and order problems. Half of the squads said they did not actively police off-street prostitution and only became involved when the public complained.

These areas included Bristol, Bradford, Cambridge, Coventry, Essex, Greater Manchester, Hampshire, Liverpool, Midlothian, North Staffordshire, Northampton, Stoke-on-Trent, Plymouth and Wolverhampton.

Twenty squads reported a total of 1,231 women working as prostitutes in off-street locations. The number of women per squad ranged from three in Liverpool to 400 in Bristol.

The view expressed by a number of vice teams was that they could do little more than "keep the lid on it". One officer interviewed said: "It's the oldest profession in the book. You'll never get rid of it. Sometimes we feel like we're getting it under control a bit, but you

How vice squads would tackle brothels		
Change in Law	No of squads	%
Power of arrest and entry	10	48
Legalisation	7	33
Power to arrest staff and clients	3	14
Burden of proof to be on defence in immoral earnings cases	3	14
Simplify, update legislation	2	10
Power to close brothels	2	10

can guarantee as soon as you turn your back, it's back again.

"It's a never-ending problem. That's why I think they ought to legalise it and give them somewhere they can work."

Almost all squads complained about the lack of powers they have to deal with brothels under the Sexual Offences Act 1956. Officers want additional powers of arrest, entry and closure, as well as changes to the law to move the burden of proof to the defence in immoral earnings cases.

The report, *The National Vice Squad Survey*, by Catherine

Kerb crawling fines

Squad	Level of average fine (£)
Leicester	25
Leeds	50
Plymouth	50
Northampton	50-75
Southampton	50-80
North Staffordshire	100
Bournemouth	100
Middlesbrough	100
Doncaster	100
Norwich	129
Westminster	150
Bradford	200
Coventry	200-300
Derby	200-300

ine Benson and Roger Mathews, found that the number of street prostitutes had dropped in most areas. On average, about 34 women worked each red light district. The number prosecuted had fallen from 9,196 cases in 1988 to 7,912 in 1993. Meanwhile, the number of kerb-crawlers prosecuted nationally had increased slightly, from 622 in 1988 to 857 in 1993.

The average number of street women arrested per squad was 334 a year, ranging from 2,315 in Westminster to none in Blackpool.

Half of the squads complained that they spent 50 per cent of their time doing paperwork after making arrests, and

the vast majority said they spent, at most, a quarter of their time patrolling the streets.

The officers said fines and arrests did not deter prostitutes. When asked what changes they would like, the majority called for the power of arrest to be applied to kerb-crawlers, as well as female prostitutes. Some squads, however, felt that the time had come for experimentation with what they saw as more liberal legislation - such as legalisation - and alternative sanctions, such as community service.

One officer said: "The main problem is that there's no real deterrent. And the system just basically regurgitates them. They work because they're no money, they get arrested and fined, then they pay the fine and go back onto the street and round and round they go. It's just a blip in their earning capacity for that evening, or a form of taxation."

The research showed that some women were highly mobile and worked between different cities.

The powers to punish kerb-crawlers were widely criticised. Average fines were about £110, but in some areas, such as Leicester, they were as low as £25.

Officers considered the fines system at the discretion of magistrates, as something of a lottery. This was reinforced by the view that even when substantial evidence had been gathered, the "unsupportive" nature of the judicial system made their efforts essentially a waste of time.

Officers complained that it was particularly difficult to prove a kerb-crawler had "persistently" approached a prostitute and was a "nuisance", as is necessary under current laws.

The report concluded that vice squads saw the need for an urgent review of existing legislation.

The authors said: "There is a likelihood that more forces will move towards the informal toleration of these off-street establishments. In the long term, such a strategy could result in more extensive commercialisation of the trade."

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Clinton visit: Presidential entourage preceded by large teams of planners



Local hero: President John F Kennedy leaving Cork City Hall during his visit to Ireland in June 1963 (above), and with then Irish Prime Minister, Sean Lemass (below).

Ross, Wexford. It is, however, a bittersweet memory, since he met his death in Dallas only five months later. Although President Clinton can be confident of a warm welcome, he can never hope to recreate the adoration and adulation afforded to JFK. As the first Catholic president of the United States, Kennedy was an even greater hero in Ireland than elsewhere. His visit seemed to symbolise a new, outgoing mood in the Republic.

The visit is remembered as a public relations triumph both for Kennedy and for Ireland and included a visit to his ancestral home in New



Britain's ghosts take to outdoor afterlife

Britain has more ghost sightings than any other country in the world - and the most spectacular apparitions are seen outdoors, according to a new study.

There is a theory that ghosts seen in old castles and deserted mansions are the product of fungal spores which can chemically stimulate ghostly hallucinations, according to *County Living* magazine.

But what explanation can there be for the 40 per cent of sightings outdoors?

The magazine, investigating sightings around the country, divides outdoor ghosts into two main varieties.

The first is the communicative or interactive ghost which is both sensitive to people around and seems able to act under its own steam.

An example has been seen many times across Dartmoor - an enormous pair of hairy hands. Making their first appearance in the 1920s, they have been seen overturning pony traps, taking charge of motorists' steering wheels and clawing at caravan windows.

Ghosts in the second category are more believable. These have been described as paranormal rather than supernatural, perhaps generated by forces of nature unknown to us. Known as cyclical or imprint apparitions, there have been around 10,000 sightings.

They are like a small, 30-second reel of cine film projected on to the air showing someone or something long gone from the area and retained by some force we do not understand. Like celluloid itself, they tend to fade over time, having an average "life span" of around 400 years.

An exception is the oldest ghost in the United Kingdom, the horseman of Bottlesby Down, in Dorset, who seems to date back to the Bronze Age about 2,500 years ago. He usually appears close to the A3081 between Cranborne and Sixpenny Handley, galloping along then vanishing without a trace.

One of the more outragous is Sir Francis Drake, who hurtles across Dartmoor in a black coach drawn by four headless horses.

ECOAQUA: A UNIQUE OCCASION FOR DEFINING THE SEA, WATERS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

All the major protagonists of the Galli reform bill meet face to face.

GENOA FAIR 15th - 19th NOVEMBER 1995



The ECOAQUA Marine Environment exhibition will be held in Genoa, a city involved with the sea through history and by vocation. ECOAQUA will be the first specialized symposium held in the Mediterranean dedicated to systems, technologies and products for the protection and restoration of the water life cycle and that of the marine environment.

Two symposiums will explain the application of the Galli reform bill and the EU Directive for the Mediterranean,

US teaches Belfast lesson in security

DAVID MICKLETRICK
Ireland correspondent

Although the authorities in Belfast are accustomed to mounting huge security operations, even old hands say they have seen nothing to match the preparations for President Bill Clinton's swing through the city.

With the President due to stay overnight in Belfast at the end of the month, large teams of advance organisers have been pouring in for many weeks and more are on the way.

The scale of the activity was

such that it was at first thought

the Belfast trip was something

out of the ordinary, but it has

now dawned that presidential

visits are always preceded by

what might be thought a surfeit

of planning and organisation.

There is, however, keen Irish

and American political interest

in the occasion, since its purpose

is to underline the identification

of the President with the Irish

peace process. He regards his

involvement in Ireland as one

of his foreign policy successes,

and mentions it often in speeches

and on other subjects.

Gerry Adams, president of

Sinn Fein, has said he hopes the

visit will inject some momentum

into a process which has for

many months been deadlocked

on the issue of arms decommissioning.

When the Clinton visit was

announced some months ago,

Washington's assumption was

that talks would probably be

under way by now. Since there

is no chance of this happening by the end of the month, American sights have been lowered. Now it seems the most President Clinton can hope for is to visit a city which still at peace.

Detailed preparations for the visit began a month ago with the arrival of a large "site survey team" which chartered a coach and drove all over Northern Ireland inspecting places for the president to visit. Accompanied by British government officials the group, which included specialists in communications, security and media facilities and transportation, looked at 30 sites in three days.

Just over a week ago these were followed by a "pre-advance team" which re-examined some sites and looked at other possibilities. Two weeks from now the actual "advance team" is expected, and only then will arrangements be finalised.

By that stage dozens of possibilities will have been eliminated and a firm itinerary settled for the one-and-a-half-day visit: the US secret service officers have a saying that on the day "everything will collapse into place".

The presidential entourage will be huge, consisting of hundreds of people; his motorcade will contain 30 vehicles. Hotel accommodation in Belfast is already heavily booked, with up to 500 members of the US press corps expected to follow President Clinton. After Belfast the president is due to travel to Dublin.

During his stay he is expected to meet local political leaders, including Mr Adams.

The possibility is that he will host a "revolving reception" so that opposing political leaders need not come into contact with each other. It is also highly likely that he will visit Londonderry to meet the SDLP leader, John Hume.

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Andreotti faces murder trial

ANDREW GUMBEL

Rome

The former Italian prime minister, Giulio Andreotti, already on trial for criminal involvement with the Sicilian Mafia, was indicted yesterday on the separate and even more damaging charge of ordering the murder of an investigative journalist who had been threatening to reveal some of his darkest political secrets.

Mr Andreotti, the *eminence grise* of the postwar Christian Democrat establishment and Italy's best-known politician abroad, was ordered to stand trial on 2 February along with five other suspects for the killing of Mino Pecorelli, a Rome-based magazine editor who was shot in the head twice at close range outside his offices on 20 March 1979.

According to the prosecution, Mr Andreotti, at the time serving the fifth of his seven stints as prime minister, asked his friends in the Sicilian Mafia to arrange the murder because he was afraid of the potentially damaging revelations that Pecorelli might make about his activities during the kidnap and murder of a fellow Christian Democrat and former prime minister, Aldo Moro, by the Red Brigades in 1978.

Among Mr Andreotti's co-defendants will be two Cosa Nostra chieftains, Pippo Calo and Gaetano Badalamenti, the two gangsters accused of actually carrying out the crime, Michelangelo La Barbera and Massimo Carminati, and one of Mr Andreotti's closest political allies, the former magistrate and foreign trade minister, Claudio Vitalone.

The case is based almost wholly on the revelations of six

mafiosi who have turned state's evidence, including the first and most important of the Cosa Nostra supergrasses, Tommaso Buscetta.

The judge presiding over the preliminary court ruled yesterday that the accounts of the six tallied sufficiently to provide a "coherent basis to proceed".

Lawyers for Mr Andreotti and Mr Vitalone, however, described the admission of their evidence as a "death knell for justice" and "a web of accusations based on stories that have been cooked up and recoked".

Rumours have been swirling for years that the Christian Democrat leadership, including the faction led by Mr Andreotti, allowed Moro to be killed, because he represented a threat to their party interests and because he favoured a political coalition with the Communist Party.

Pecorelli had several sources in the intelligence services which he used time and again to embarrass the Christian Democrats in his magazine, *Op.* Inevitably he made many enemies, and acquired a reputation for obtaining information by blackmail.

One of the prosecution's difficulties will be to prove that he had indeed dug up compromising information about Mr Andreotti, since he took his secrets with him to the grave. There is also a problem with the witnesses, since the two members of Cosa Nostra with whom Mr Andreotti is alleged to have had direct contact, cousins Nino and Ignazio Salvo, are both now dead.

The defence will concentrate on knocking the credibility of the Mafia turncoats, as it is doing at Mr Andreotti's other trial, which began in Palermo on



Prime suspect: Mr Andreotti being escorted to court in Perugia for questioning over the 1979 murder of a journalist, Mino Pecorelli

international

Walesa fights for presidency

ADRIAN BRIDGE

Warsaw

Polish voters yesterday faced a perplexing choice between 13 different candidates in the first round of presidential elections.

The list included two former prime ministers, the head of the central bank, a veteran dissident, a been-lovers' campaigner and a popular comedian. Only two candidates, however, were given much of a chance of getting through to the run-off in two weeks time: Aleksander Kwasniewski, a reformed Communist, and Lech Walesa, the incumbent and former leader of the Solidarity trade union.

Mr Kwasniewski, the front runner, was buoyant as he voted in the wealthy Warsaw district of Wilanow. He was adamant that a vote for him would not mean a return to Communism. "Communism is a thing of the past. There is no sense in its coming back," said the former sports minister in Poland's last Communist administration who now describes

himself as a Social Democrat. "Poland has moved on. We are successfully building democracy and the free market and whoever is elected president should defend these successes."

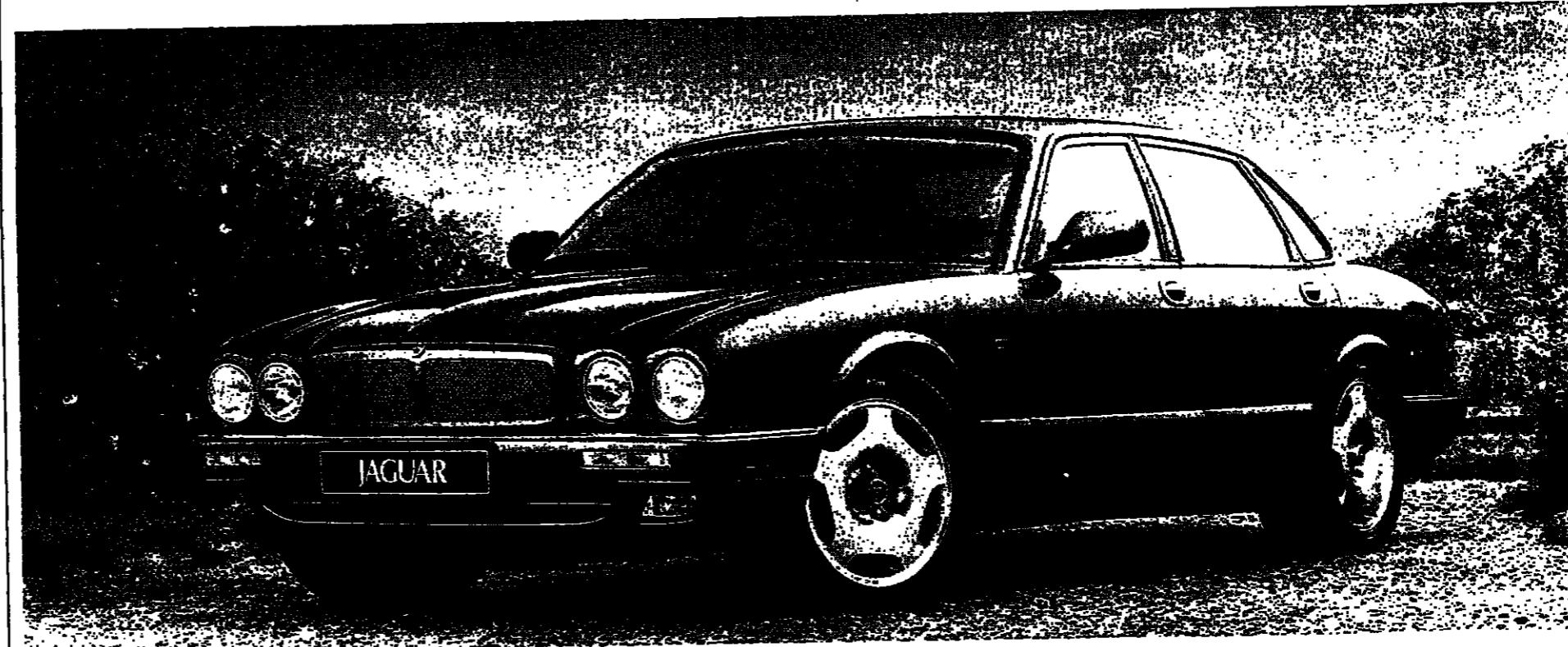
Mr Walesa has based his campaign on the deep apprehension many Poles feel about Mr Kwasniewski and his Democratic Left Alliance (SLD), partly holding too much power. The SLD is already the dominant force in parliament and the government and controls many local administrations.

In addition to Solidarity, Mr Walesa has won the backing of the Catholic Church, which is terrified that a Kwasniewski presidency could lead to a curtailment of its influence.

In his first five-year term, Mr Walesa was criticised by many of his former allies for being impulsive, power-hungry and lacking the education appropriate for such high office.

Opinion polls suggest that most Poles will probably vote for Mr Walesa to keep Mr Kwasniewski out.

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385

14
international

French seek extradition of bomb suspects from UK

MARY DEJESKY
Paris

The French judicial authorities were yesterday preparing to request the extradition of two Algerians detained in central London on Saturday under the Prevention of Terrorism Act. They believe one of the men, Abdelkader Benouis, alias Abou Farès, commanded the terrorist cells responsible for recent bomb attacks in Paris and Lyons.

The other was said by a French radio station to be Farouk Deneche, the brother of Abdelkrim Deneche, whom the French tried unsuccessfully to have extradited from Sweden last month in connection with the St Michel Métro bombing in July. Abdelkrim Deneche was freed from custody in Stockholm last week pending deportation from Sweden as an "undesirable alien".

Scotland Yard has refused to confirm or deny the identity of

the two men held at the weekend, who are being questioned at the top-security Paddington Green police station in west London, or to give any details. French reports said the two were arrested on Saturday afternoon after several days of surveillance, as they were preparing to leave the country.

Mr Benouis had been named in French media reports the previous day as the commander and possible paymaster of the Paris-based co-ordinator of the bombings. He has lived in London since being granted political asylum in 1993 and edited the British edition of an Islamic newsletter, *Al-Ansar*.

It is not known whether the British authorities knew, when they granted asylum, that he had been sentenced to death in absentia for his presumed role in the 1992 Algiers airport bombing, in which nine people were killed.

French reports say that Mr Benouis, who has had at least

three aliases, was the recipient of regular telephone calls from Paris made by Boualem Bensaid, one of 10 people detained by French police last week. The number of Mr Benouis's mobile phone is also said to have been found in notebooks belonging to Khaled Kelkal, the Algerian killed by police after a three-week manhunt in September.

Kelkal became a wanted man after his fingerprints were allegedly found on a bomb which failed to explode on the high-speed train line near Lyons in August. French sources now say that Mr Bensaid's fingerprints were found on that bomb, too, and on the remains of the bomb which exploded at Maison Blanche Métro station in Paris on the day of Kelkal's funeral. They also say that in Mr Benouis's Paris flat police found quantities of sodium chlorate – one of the explosive agents common to the Paris and Lyons bombs – detailed maps and

timetables of the Paris and Lyons Métro and railway networks, an automatic pistol and foreign bank documents. The identification of Mr Benouis and the "London connection" by the French media followed several weeks of criticism from French officials about what they saw as Britain's lax approach to the activities of Islamic fundamentalists.

Saturday's arrests were accordingly greeted in Paris with a mixture of "we told them so" and condescending approval that the British authorities appeared to be acting on pledges of a harder line given to President Jacques Chirac in London 10 days ago.

However, French reports also noted that the Paris investigators needed to make out a better case for the extradition of Mr Benouis than they had for the extradition of Mr Deneche from Sweden. Otherwise, they warned, they could face similar embarrassment.



Flying the flag: Chechens demonstrate on bullet-ridden Presidential Palace during a rally in Grozny. The building was badly damaged by Russian forces early this year when used as a rebel stronghold

Photograph: Reuter

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IN BRIEF

Starvation looms in typhoon's wake

Manila — The Philippines appears to have gone through a "miniature war" with the passage of super-typhoon Angela, which killed more than 370 people and left some areas without food and drinking water, a senior government official said. The spectre of starvation loomed over the affected regions as village heads and rescue workers reported how winds and columns of water had swept away people, livestock, houses and ready-to-harvest crops. *Reuter*

Boost for Gramm's flagging campaign

Washington — Senator Phil Gramm gained some encouragement for his flagging Presidential campaign with a win this weekend in a straw poll of Republicans in Maine, writes Rupert Cornwell. Senator Gramm, stuck in single figures in the polls, won 602 votes, almost double his closest rival, Senator Richard Lugar of Indiana. Bob Dole, the Senate majority leader came third, followed by Senator Arlen Specter of Pennsylvania.

Ciller wins vote of confidence

Ankara — Turkey's Prime Minister, Tansu Ciller, won a vote of confidence, bringing a pause to six weeks of political turmoil that will cause an early election next month. Parliament voted 243 to 171 for her coalition government, intended to serve until the poll. *AP*

Nobel Prize winner's nephew snatched

Guatemala City — The 22-month-old nephew of the Guatemalan Nobel Peace Prize winner, Rigoberta Menchu, was kidnapped by two unidentified gunmen who snatched the baby, Juan Carlos Velasquez Menchu, from the arms of his sister Cristina and sped off in a jeep with tinted windows. Ms Menchu said she suspected the motive was political. *Reuter*

Kashmiris want freedom, not autonomy

Srinagar — Kashmiris vowed to boycott next month's state legislative election, saying the government's promise of autonomy is inadequate and they want independence. In the rest of India, opposition politicians criticised the Prime Minister, PV Narasimha Rao, for not consulting them before making the election announcement on Saturday. *AP*

Landmine kills Tajik woman

Dushanbe — A woman was killed when a land mine exploded in a park in Tajikistan's capital. Police said it was apparently planted by radical opposition members to thwart celebrations of the anniversary of Tajikistan's new constitution. *AP*



Villagers in eastern Bicol region carry away a victim killed during flash-floods caused by Typhoon Angela

How to become a proofreader

by Trevor Horwood

Do you envy people who love their jobs? I did too, so a few years ago I looked for a way to combine my love of books with the need to earn a living. I was a successful sales manager, so I needed something that paid well.

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Enjoy

international

Commonwealth Conference: Abacha will get most brickbats, but Major can expect censure for defending French nuclear tests

Angry partners put Britain in dock

STEVE CRAWSHAW

The Queen has already arrived, after travelling on a common-or-garden first-class plane ticket for the first time in her life. John Major arrives on Wednesday for talks with New Zealand's Prime Minister, Jim Bolger. Then on Friday the Main Event begins.

The Commonwealth Conference, which is being held in Auckland until next Monday, has a mixture of the good, the bad and the controversial on its agenda. First comes the historic, feel-good part. The conference – the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, known as CHOGM, to rhyme with "flog 'em" – will sound fanfares for Nelson Mandela, who is attending his first summit as South African leader.

The Commonwealth prides itself that it helped play a role in helping South Africa on the path to democracy. There is no mistaking the pride of the Commonwealth secretary-general, Chief Emeka Anyaoku, that South Africa was so quick to rejoin the organisation which the apartheid government had swept out of in a huff. Mr Mandela applied for renewed South African membership only a fortnight after his inauguration as President last year.

South Africa's return to the fold is seen as a double victory marking not only the triumph of non-racial democracy but a confirmation of the importance of the Commonwealth itself.

South Africa, once the ultimate pariah, looks set to become one of the most important members in the club.

What began as a post-imperial association has become a mutual-support group for democracy and development,

where Britain's role is less and less crucial. The Queen is still head of the Commonwealth, a position that she will retain; in some respects, she represents the continuity of the Commonwealth. But Britain is not the moving force that it was, nor even, perhaps, the binding glue. It is unclear whether King Charles III will be the head of the Commonwealth.

The Secretariat of the Commonwealth is still based in London. But Britain is now just one member among many (52 as of this week). These days, it is as likely to be at odds with the rest of the Commonwealth as it is to be in the mainstream.

This week Britain will spend some time in the dock. London's soft-pedalling on French nuclear testing in the Pacific is unpopular with many member-states.

In Auckland, the demonstrators look set to be out in force. Even in the politest confines of the conference hall, there are likely to be harsh words. The host country, New Zealand, Australia, and the Pacific island states are all indignant at France's defiance of world opinion, and Britain's perceived struggling up to France is not appreciated.

But the main brickbats will be aimed at General Sani Abacha, Nigeria's military leader, assuming he does not decide to stay at home.

With remarkable timing, General Abacha's courts last week pronounced a death sentence on the writer Ken Saro Wiwa. Mr Anyaoku, himself a Nigerian, did not hide his anger at the action, which triggered worldwide protests. Nigeria's trampling of human rights will figure prominently in debates this week.



Still loyal: The Queen walking past a royalist placard held by a member of 'Aif's Imperial Army' in Wellington

Photograph: Nigel Marple/Reuters

Officials emphasise that the Commonwealth is not a rule-based organisation. The possibility of threatening Nigeria with expulsion is remote. Equally, however, the Harare declaration, which was signed at the Commonwealth conference of 1991, split out a commitment to democratic norms. The Harare declaration now serves as a kind of Commonwealth touchstone.

The revolutions that toppled Communism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe had the knock-on effect of weakening one-party regimes elsewhere. Africa ceased to be a proxy battleground for the Cold War, where dictators could enjoy being propped up by Moscow or Washington as honoured representatives of "socialism" or "the free world". Now, in Mr Anyaoku's words, there are "only" three military regimes still in place in Sierra Leone, Gambia and Nigeria. Mr Anyaoku sees one of the aims of the Commonwealth as being to help the "democratic ethic to take root".

Despite the controversies, the Commonwealth can afford to remain upbeat, not least because a queue is forming to join.

South Africa's new membership may be the first in a long line. Cameroon's bid to join the Commonwealth was approved last week. Mozambique's ties with the Commonwealth are closer than before, and there are reports that the former Portuguese colony might join.

Mr Anyaoku says the Commonwealth can still expand, though its "special qualities" must remain. Certainly, other European governments have continued to export arms in contravention to European criteria, which state that "the respect of human rights in the final country of destination" must be considered in arms exports.

In 1993 the European Council of Ministers decided to consider arms sales to Nigeria on a case-by-case basis, but many have got through.

The report points out that European states are still allowed to sell arms to the Nigerian police, which has suppressed pro-democracy demonstrations. In June the Government issued licences for CS gas and rubber bullets to be exported. Last year the Government issued 30 licences for non-lethal equipment, which could include components for tanks and missiles.

About 20 licences were granted for goods on the "Military List", including machine-guns, bombs, missiles and mines.

In the last two years, France has sold Nigeria armoured reconnaissance vehicles and Australia has sold 300 armoured troop carriers. Nigeria has received military trucks from Germany, artillery from Italy and howitzers from Sweden. Non-EU countries have also sold arms. Mr Truscott said: "We must exert maximum pressure to secure a total ban on arms sales to the regime, which is flouting human rights on a massive scale."

Mr Karadzic said previous peace conferences on ex-Yugoslavia had failed because they lacked US support. Asked why he had not gone to Dayton himself, he said: "It was not important who took part... We all think the same". Mr Karadzic has been indicted for war crimes by the international tribunal at the Hague and is liable to arrest if he leaves the country.

Yesterday mediators were to hold more talks with rebel Serbs in Belgrade. Mr Karadzic is negotiating on behalf of the Bosnian Serbs, who lost large slices of territory to a Bosnian-Croat offensive this summer. The US talks, said Mr Karadzic, should involve the return of part of this territory.

Karadzic praises US role in Bosnia talks

Belgrade (Reuters) — The Bosnian Serb leader, Radovan Karadzic, said he believed Yugoslav peace talks in Dayton, Ohio would succeed, and welcomed the active role played by the United States.

In unusually conciliatory remarks made on Serbian radio, Mr Karadzic said the US-brokered conference should result in "the final establishment of peace in Bosnia". The Dayton negotiations were important because "they were initiated by the American side, which for the first time accepted and recognised the existence of the Serbian entity in Bosnia and the fact that Bosnia cannot survive as a unitary state".

Serbia's President, Slobodan Milosevic, is negotiating on behalf of the Bosnian Serbs, who lost large slices of territory to a Bosnian-Croat offensive this summer. The US talks, said Mr Karadzic, should involve the return of part of this territory.

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Notes

- To enter our Liberty prize draw, collect 5 differently numbered tokens (including one from the Independent on Sunday) and send with a completed entry form to: The Independent, Liberty Peter Drove, PO Box 626, London NW1 2AB. The closing date is 27 November 1995. The draw will be held on Saturday 11 November.
- Winners will be notified by telephone and their names and photographs will be published in the paper.
- Prizes consist of tokens that may be used in any of the 21 Liberty branches in the UK.
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INDEPENDENT

special report

As MPs debate Nolan today, lobbyists are rushing to recruit Labour's brightest brains, say Chris Blackhurst and Nicholas Timmins

Everybody wants to know Tony Blair

Plenty will be said in the House of Commons about the lobbying industry later today. As MPs debate Nolan and the disclosure of their outside earnings, Labour backbenchers will not resist having a go at Tories' links with the likes of Ian Greer, GJW, Westminster Strategy, Westminster Communications and the other specialist parliamentary consultancies.

For many Labour MPs, lobbying is a dirty word. That, at least, is the public face. In truth, the party and the lobbyists are moving closer and closer together as the election nears. Whereas once Labour would have been ignored, now lobbyists hang on to the party's every word.

The annual conference this year in Brighton was awash with representatives from all the leading lobbying firms.

Lowe Bell, home of Sir Tim Bell, once Margaret Thatcher's image-maker, broke with years of tradition and even held a reception there: some of the biggest names in business, such as Lloyd's of London, NatWest and Littlewoods, were happy to sponsor events on the Labour fringe. Midland Bank sponsored a crèche, while Sainsbury's and British Airways held receptions.

MPs, particularly post-Nolan, may be sensitive about linking up with lobbyists, but many party workers and researchers have no such qualms. They see lobbying as everything that it entails as a new career opportunity, seeking out jobs doing everything from monitoring events at Westminster and Brussels to briefing clients on forthcoming legislation and effecting introductions with ministers and officials. Prior to the 1992 election there were only two or three lobbyists who had recently worked for Labour – most notably Mike Craven, now managing director of Market Access, who had worked in John Prescott's office, and Tony Page at GJW, who had worked for John Cunningham. Labour's defeat in 1992 brought no rush to snap up ex-Kinnock advisers. Neil Stewart, who with Charles Clarke was one of Kinnock's key fixers, says the atmosphere was "distinctly hostile". He applied for jobs for which he believes he was plainly qualified and found himself without even an interview.

The change began with John Smith's CBI speech in September 1992 which began the rapprochement with business that the Kinnock era never really achieved. Mike Lee, a well-respected adviser to David Blunkett for almost five years, and Julian Eccles, a key cam-

paign co-ordinator in Walworth Road, moved across in 1993 to Westminster Strategy and Hill and Knowlton, respectively, two of the key players.

Meanwhile, outside the world of lobbying, the management consultants Booz Allen & Hamilton took on Wendy Alexander, one of Labour's brightest researchers in Scotland, with Andersen Consulting making the most dramatic capture by employing Patricia Hewitt, a key figure from the Kinnock era, who went to the company from the IPPR, the left-of-centre think-tank set up to help Labour break the mould of outdated policies. Margaret Hodge worked briefly for Price Waterhouse after she ceased to be leader of Islington council and before she became an MP.

The interest of management

consultants in people with an inside knowledge of Labour has been followed over the past 18 months by the trickle of researchers and other Labour Party staff moving to lobbying firms turning almost into a torrent, though the quality of the people now employed by more than a dozen lobbying firms varies enormously.

For Labour workers, many of whom have existed for years on a relative pittance, the chance to earn a decent salary is difficult to resist. For many of them, as well, there is the realisation that come the election their chances of remaining near the action are diminishing. For as soon as the election is over, assuming that Labour wins, civil servants will then move in and only a handful of very senior people will be made special advisers in the new government.

"Some of the lobbying firms have bought themselves a pretty bum deal," one close observer of the scene said. "Recruiting former researchers to some of Labour's more obscure frontbenchers or MPs is hardly going to give their clients Gordon Brown's ear, however much it might make it appear that they have good Labour contacts."

Some, however, have been significant recruits for the lobbyists – notably Neal Lawson at Lowe Bell, who previously worked for Gordon Brown, Colin Byrne at Shandwick, who was Peter Mandelson's key lieutenant in the campaigns and communications department of Walworth Road, and David Gardner, at the Public Policy Unit, architect of the highly successful outcome Labour achieved from the Boundary Commission review.

Other notable names who have gone into lobbying are Rex Osborn, political intelligence officer at Wal-

worth Road, Paul Wheeler, from Labour's election team, and Murray Elder, who was John Smith's chief of staff.

Mike Craven, of Market Access, says the growth is entirely market-driven. "Business now thinks Labour may well form the next government. They want to know Labour's views, they want to know the personalities and they want to know how a Labour government may affect their business."

"It is sound business sense – and the level of interest is far higher than before the last election."

Charles Miller, of Public Policy Unit, sums up the mood: "Everyone in town wants an assessment of Labour policy and its implications. Before the 1992 election, even when Labour was leading in the polls, it was very hard to interest business in Labour. Now they want to know what Labour is going to do to us, what it will cost us, what we should be thinking about. They are far better pre-

Who's who on the lobby circuit

Lobby group	Ex-Labour employee	... worked for
Market Access	Mike Craven Ian Kennedy Amanda Francis	John Prescott George Foulkes, Labour frontbencher Mo Mowlam
Westminster Strategy	Mike Lee	David Blunkett
Shandwick	Rex Osborn	was chief political intelligence officer, Walworth Road, Labour headquarters
Westminster Communications	Colin Byrne	Labour chief press officer and deputy to Peter Mandelson when he was campaigns and communications director
Lowe Bell	Murray Elder	John Smith
GJW	Neal Lawson	Gordon Brown
Public Policy Unit	Tim Fallon	Joan Walley, former transport spokesperson
Connect	Tony Page David Wilson Elizabeth Davies Stephanie Ayres	Jack Cunningham David Blunkett
Ian Greer	Robbie MacDuff	Andrew Faulds, backbencher
Hill and Knowlton	David Gardner	Alan Roberts, former environment spokesman
Granfield	Paul Wheeler	Labour local government and boundary commission specialist, Election co-ordinator Walworth Road
APCO	Julian Eccles	Campaign co-ordinator and assistant to party general secretary, Walworth Road
Waterfront Partnership	Phil Kelly	Ex-editor of Tribune and former adviser to Michael Meacher
Politics International	Stephen King	Labour agriculture researcher
	Michael MacDonald	Policy unit, Walworth Road
	Jeanette Gould	Kevin Barron and John Smith

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pared for a Labour government than they ever were in 1992."

Business said Mr Miller, no longer wants to "throttle Labour, but understand Labour." Lobbyists' wooing of the party, said Mr Miller, "has been pretty feverish for about a year. People we work for are realising it is better to work with a policy in gestation than to wait until it has gone through."

Lobbying consultancies are keen to get their political spread more balanced between left and right. "No one wants to be left holding the wrong baby," said Mr Miller.

Colin Byrne argues that what has been acquired from the more able recruits is not only Labour contacts, but also wider skills. "Where could you learn more about relationships, crisis management and communication than working alongside Peter Mandelson the Labour Party?" he says.

"I occasionally say to clients: 'you think you've got problems; you should

have seen Labour in the period after the 1983 election'."

There is little sign, however, that the increase in lobbying in Labour's direction is resulting in Labour MPs taking or being offered paid consultancies. Mike Craven believes they will not take them. "It is culturally frowned on, anyway, in the Labour Party," he says.

"One or two have done it in the past. But it has never been regarded as the right thing to do, and at the moment it is going the other way, with Labour trying to redefine its relationship with the unions so that they sponsor the local party, not the individual MP."

In the post-Nolan atmosphere – with Shandwick, for example, deciding to part with David Mellor, its only paid parliamentary adviser – recruitment of Labour MPs is even less likely. "If a company offers a nice steady consultancy to a backbencher, the press get on to it; then the company suffers as well as the MP," claims one public affairs consultant.

Labour talks to business

Labour's contacts with business and industry, and their desire to hear and influence Labour policy, are more extensive than ever before.

At the immediate policy level, Labour has consulted much more widely than in the past before formulating policy. The information superhighway document produced by Chris Smith, for example, followed a "policy forum" in which Labour frontbenchers took evidence from companies, almost in the style of a Commons select committee, from British Telecom and Mercury to the cable operators and others.

Frontbenchers regularly meet business leaders through the Industry Forum – an arm's-length body set up in 1993 in Robin Cook's day as trade and industry spokesman. It has regular meetings across sectors – pharmaceuticals or telecoms, for example – and across issues, such as small business or competition policy.

About 150 companies and trade associations contribute between £500 and £1,000, either as active members or more passive subscribers, to an information service. Some 30 are happy to be named, including Thorn/EMI, BAA, ICL, Merck, Sharpe & Dohme and Tesco, and they include past Tory party contributors such as McAlpine.

Others, however, do not want their names released. "Some are still very sensitive about it, and I think that's a pretty awful reflection on the current government," says Gerald Frankel, the businessman

who chairs the forum. "It doesn't like people talking to the opposition party."

With potential government contracts at stake, "some are very nervous about it being known that they are having a dialogue with the Opposition. This is a very unhealthy development that I've watched take place in the past 10 years or so".

Executives, however, have attended in steadily increasing numbers the business seminars that the Fabian Society has run with Labour frontbenchers: while Neil Stewart, a former Kinnock aide, has specialised in heavily subscribed conferences for business and the public sector, which attract executives to hear and attempt to influence Labour's view of the world.

Last week the business breakfast that Gordon Brown held at the Institute for Public Policy Research drew an audience that included the chairman, chief executive or managing director from a string of blue chip companies, including Pearson, Reckitt & Colman, the Prudential, Lehman Brothers, Lucas, Unilever and IBM.

The IPPR itself has seen its corporate sponsorship rise sharply over the past year, with companies from the telecoms industry, the media, banking, the pharmaceutical industry and other sectors sponsoring its work directly or contributing to its core funding.

Stands for next year's party conference are already sold out, after a year which saw the highest proportion ever taken by corporate clients.

... and business talks back

Robin Gray, from the Public Policy Unit, one of the leading lobbying firms, did not hear about the bush when he spoke at a private conference last month. Shadow frontbenchers were already "run ragged" by invitations from lobbyists and their clients. Their diaries were virtually full. But if the audience of representatives from some of Britain's biggest companies, including British Aerospace and Cable & Wireless, wanted to get their messages across before the next election, now was the time to write.

In the office of Margaret Beckett, Labour's new trade and industry spokesperson, they well know what Mr Gray was talking about. "She has a full of invitations," said one of her staff, adding that it was growing daily, as companies wanted to talk to her about Labour's

forthcoming trade and industry policy document.

Michael Meacher's office is similarly bombarded. "Because industry thinks Labour is set to win, it is pressing hard to lobby shadow ministers," said Mr Meacher's assistant.

"If I write to 25 organisations, I will receive phone calls the following day from 23," said Mr Meacher's aide. "That would not have happened a few years ago."

Likewise, if a Shadow spokesperson makes a speech, he or she can expect to have requests for copies almost immediately from three or four lobbying organisations. Again, that was not the case in the run up to the 1992 election.

Where once there was silence, now there is two-way dialogue. As the prospect of government looms, Labour and lobbying are not such dirty words after all.

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Diary

RUTH DUDLEY EDWARDS



I was somewhat aggrieved, at first, to read that Keith Waterhouse and his pals had decided to keep the relaunch dinner of The Useless Information Society stag – on the grounds that women have no use for facts that are not the slightest value to anybody.

"Dummit," I cried. "Am I not a woman? And do I not know in chronological order the names of all Elizabeth Taylor's husbands?" But then I realised that Miss Taylor might find that litany useful should she write her autobiography, so it didn't qualify.

In bed that night I tried and tried to think of a piece of wholly useless information and fell asleep from sheer boredom. So fair enough, Keith. You may be right. I, at least, will not be leading a protest march or complaining to the Equal Opportunities Commission.

I squirmed a bit at a gentle rebuke from Vanessa Stern of Chichester and Bognor Regis Victim Support about my remarks last week re the help offered me over my burglary. She points out that such groups do not counsel, but give practical advice to people in need.

Of course, I applaud the volunteers who provide such support, but like some of my similarly crabby friends who fear the Californianisation of this once sturdy people, I am put off by the language they use. A voice on the phone saying, "Sorry to hear of your burglary. Are you OK or are there some practical problems with which we can assist you?" is one thing. But if having had some property stolen and the contents of drawers tossed around the house makes me a "victim" who has "suffered", what terminology will be appropriate if my limbs are blown off by a car-bomb?

A friend backed me up by giggling about the experience of her father. In his time a war-hero, a businessman and an MP, who has

also experienced great personal tragedy, he was no more than irritated recently when his golf-clubs were stolen at a railway station. But as he was leaving the office of the railway police, one of the officers pressed a card into his hand and said: "If you ring this number, someone will counsel you on your loss."

Apropos the suggestion that the perpetrators of the burglary might have been from the IRA, my friend Eoin points out that rather than call them "Provos", I should adopt their own terminology and substitute "volunteers on active service".

I was diverted to learn that Sir Terry Burns, Permanent Secretary to the Treasury, is trying to teach his staff manners with the help of a memorandum instructing them to greet messengers and security staff, apologise to each other if they have spoken sharply and generally try to behave like normal people. This sent me down memory lane to the day during my civil service career when I

was assigned a new recruit, a brilliant graduate – whom I shall call Ebenezer – whose intelligence and industry were exceeded only by his arrogance and rudeness.

"What are we to do about Ebenezer?" asked the rest of my staff after a few frightful days. "Break his legs," suggested the clerical assistant – to popular acclaim. Often I wished we could act on her advice, but instead we laboured on trying to enlighten him through example, constructive criticism and explaining through gritted teeth that to make enemies all around the department was counter-productive. Daily I wearily tried to repair the damage he wreaked so effortlessly.

Ebenezer's natural boorishness was exacerbated by his distress at having been posted not to the Treasury, which he felt to be his natural home, but to what he used to explain to anyone who would listen was an inferior department full of mediocrities. Eventually I was called upon to assess Ebenezer's performance and I wrote that despite his considerable intellectual gifts, I considered him so ill-mannered as to be unemployable anywhere except in the Treasury. Reader, they accepted him enthusiastically.

And I dimpled shyly at Hugh Mitchell's response to my request for verse to avenge the wrong President Clinton did me recently in having Belfast cleaned out of transformers:

What he does in the States is ancillary,
But that scoundrel, the husband of Hillary.
For upsetting our Ruth
Should be sentenced, forsooth,
To a couple of days in the pillory.

And George Hummer rubs it in:

Bill Clinton
Has never been to Frinton.
The curl of his nose and lip
is nothing to do
With the unsatisfactory state of that town's public loo.

My thanks to you and the other balm-providers. I feel much better now.

JST Looms was anxious to be informed about the 1997 Limerick celebrating Petromania:

There was a young fellow called Carter
Who was famed as a musical farter.
He could play anything
From "God save the King"
To Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata.

Today's compulsory homework is set by Kate Odgers, whose family has been preoccupied since the late 1940s with finding the beginning of a riddle her father brought home after an evening with friends. "The answer is: 'One rode a horse and the other rhododendron.' I wonder if you, or any of your readers, know the question?"

Please solve this one and thus help the Odgerses to do something useful with the rest of their lives.

Speaking of arrogance, the tenant of my affections would like you to know that a French restaurant which we

JULY 1988

comment

Riddled with corruption? I don't buy it

Driven by envy, public moral fervour over MPs and sleaze has made mountains out of molehills

Power corrupts, as we all know. But the converse is also true: impotence purifies. That is the point to bear in mind, whichever way today's vote on the Nolan report goes.

Labour, purified by 16 years in opposition, simply cannot lose. The public wants to hear what Mr Blair and his sidekicks will spend all day saying: the Tories have something to hide.

Yes folks: the Conservative Party is riddled with corruption. Every second MP is on the payroll of some dodgy "consultancy" firm or other, and the rest are available on a freelance basis. For the price of a decent lunch at Shepherd's and a cheque for £1,000, they will happily ask any question and table any motion. The worst excesses of the worst banana republic have got nothing on Mr Major's party.

Well, if you buy the idea of a Tory monopoly on sleaze, you'll buy just about anything. Need I do more than mention the names Stonehouse and Belcher? Or what about the Marconi scandal, which nearly wrecked the career of Lloyd George, that most radical of Liberals?

The same point would leap off the pages of a decent history of British local government. Indeed, growing up in Glasgow, I came to associate sleaze with certain Labour councillors who were hand in glove (with not to say related by blood and marriage) to certain building contractors.

Look abroad if you still cling to the notion of a unique nexus between sleaze and the right. In Belgium, in Spain and in France – to say nothing

of the outstandingly venal United States – corruption is a cross-party function of being in power. (In super-efficient Germany, as the Flick scandal revealed, some companies just dish out the cash to all the major parties)

Only when you appreciate the link between corruption and power, do you begin to see how laughable the entire Nolan business really is. To me, the bizarre thing is that anyone should ever consider Tory MPs worth paying, in the way "exposed" by the *Sunday Times*. The plain fact is that MPs – and most junior ministers – do not really have power. Indeed, I almost feel sorry for anyone who has partied with hard-earned cash merely for some political privilege to pose a question in the Commons. Did no one tell them about the transfer of power from the legislature to the executive?

The point is that there is only one sort of sleaze worth worrying about, and that is the sort involving ministers, or indeed civil servants. Put it this way, and you realise what a remarkably uncorrupt government we have had since 1979.

There have been sex scandals, of course. And yes, it seems likely – though we still await the Scott report – that ministers bend their own rules governing the sale of arms to Iraq. But it takes a peculiar sort of warped Puritanism to think that a man cannot run a government department simply because he likes to have it off in a Chelsea strip. And the worse conclusion to be drawn about Matrix Churchill is that, far from being in hock to the arms

dealers, certain ministers were ready to let the company's directors go to jail rather than reveal their own complicity in a covert export drive. No one has suggested for a minute that the ministers in question stood to gain financially from the trade with Iraq.

The reality is that British political life remains, by international standards, boringly punctilious. Which is not surprising, considering what mounts the press and public have made out of the pre-Nolan molehills.

So why do companies bother paying for the services of backbench MPs? For much the same reason, it seems to me, that accountancy firms take would-be clients for games of golf, drug companies shower doctors with free stationery, journalists take contacts for liver-curdling lunches

and travel firms send journalists on skin-scorching holidays. Such transactions – some of which lead to reciprocal favours, but many of which do not – are simply what makes our world go round. And in a country in which the state spends the equivalent of about 40 per cent of GNP, it would be odd if such freebies and perks never came the way of MPs.

The notion implicit in Labour's line of argument – that MPs should only represent their constituents, should represent them all equally, and should live on nothing but their salary – is absurd.

Of course, not everyone is part of the Great Chain of Buying. Roughly one fifth of the population is "corrupted" in a rather different way, in the form of doles from the state itself. These are often the same people who pester MPs for improvements in the level of benefits to which they believe themselves to be entitled, and vote for the candidate who promises the biggest improvement.

In short, public enthusiasm for new Labour's rhetoric about Nolan is the snow-white tip of a grey iceberg of hypocrisy. Well, I for one am not prepared to join in. As it happens, I find myself in a position not dissimilar to that of MPs today. I am employed as a Fellow and lecturer at a university, for which I am paid even less than an MP. A substantial piece of my income comes be abroad today, in the House of Commons and in the country. Why not vote for the publication of all tax returns while you are at it, chaps?

voices demand that we should all declare our outside earnings. The motive for this is clear. University bureaucrats want to get their hands on at least a proportion of what I and others earn "on the side". It has been argued that, because I am an employee of the university, all my income is in some sense the university's, to be taxed and redistributed as it sees fit.

Were such a measure to be introduced, I would be out of university life before you could say "something to hide". Even compulsory declaration of outside earnings would make me think twice. This would be a pity, because I rather like teaching, economically irrational though it is – just as I am sure many MPs like politics, though its opportunity cost is also high.

Why would disclosure of earnings worry me? Because, like the Tory MPs who have forced John Major to water down Nolan, I fear the envy of others. In other countries, to earn money from a variety of different sources is considered a sign of success. But even if everyone in the country were obliged to declare publicly their total earnings, the financial winners would be the moral losers.

I am not sure why envy is so powerful an emotion in this country. Perhaps it is the memory of wartime rationing. Perhaps it goes back to Puritan sermons about camels and needles' eyes. But the spirit of envy will be abroad today, in the House of Commons and in the country. Why not vote for the publication of all tax returns while you are at it, chaps?



NIALL FERGUSON
The bizarre thing is
that anyone should
consider Tory MPs
worth paying

The Jewish state believed in its unity. Patrick Cockburn analyses the tensions too strong to beat

The day the Israeli dream died

The assassination of Yitzhak Rabin was the result of a gamble that failed. His government believed that by ignoring the extreme religious right-wingers who saw the peace process as a betrayal of Israel it could isolate and marginalise them. It made no effort to disarm them, despite their repeated threats that they would resort to violence.

The peace rally at which he died was a perfect illustration of the strategy. Tens of thousands of Israeli supporters of the peace process stood in Tel Aviv's main square, singing and chanting for peace. In a side street stood a huddle of right-wingers holding a placard promising "a rope for the

The assassination will sharpen the differences between the religious and the secular Jews

traitors". But it was a bullet, not a rope, that killed the "traitor" – and may have ended for ever the dream of Jewish unity that sustained the state of Israel for 47 years.

It is nation whose citizens come from scores of different countries with a fragmented political system which gives influence to the tiniest of parties, where there are myriad tensions between the religious and the secular, the Ashkenazi (Eastern European) and Sephardi (Middle Eastern) Jews, and between groups of immigrants and competing brands of Zionism. Israelis pride themselves on their tough, argumentative, macho natures, but until yesterday they believed the threat from outside would enable them to bridge any divisions within.

Mr Rabin's policy of marginalising his opponents almost succeeded. Right-wing demonstrations in recent months have been ill-attended. The 140,000 Israeli settlers in the occupied territories received only lukewarm support from Likud, the mainstream party of the right. The opponents of progressive Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank became increasingly desperate after Mr Rabin and Yasser Arafat, the chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organisation, signed an agreement in Washington on 28 September that within a few months Israeli troops are to withdraw from the main Palestinian cities and the peace agreement will become irreversible.

Politicians and security officials saw there was a danger that the most extreme enemies of the peace process would resort to violence. The Israeli press has been speculating on the



Yitzhak Rabin: he gambled and lost

chances of a repeat of last year's atrocity when Baruch Goldstein, a religious settler, slaughtered 29 Muslims in a mosque in Hebron. "The script was written," said Professor Ehud Sprinzak, an expert on the radical right at Hebrew University. "The potential assassins were there. Over the last week I have been worried sick. Rabin was shown in posters in an Arab *kufiyah* [headdress] like Arafat, with his hands covered in blood. At a demonstration in Jerusalem there was a picture of him in SS uniform." The demonstration set the stage for assassination.

In mid summer the bodyguards around Mr Rabin and Shimon Peres were strengthened. But Yigal Amir, the assassin, was able to own a pistol and distributing anti-Rabin leaflets. Twice before this year he is said to have attended meetings addressed by the prime minister in the hope of making an attack. For all the forewarnings about violence – and Mr Rabin's assassination was frequently predicted – Amir came within a few feet of him,

despite the presence of 700 police. Perhaps they couldn't believe an Israeli Jew would ignore communal solidarity and kill their prime minister.

The assassination can only sharpen the deep differences in Israel between secular and religious Jews. The vast

majority of Israelis are secular, but the

religious are far more numerous than

just the ultra-orthodox in their black

hats and suits. Since the founding of

the state, when some early Zionists

dreamt of a secular socialist nation and

others worked to build a country

based on strict orthodox Judaism, the

differences have been deepening as

increasingly religious Israelis com-

bined territorial nationalism with cul-

tural exclusiveness.

The religious-secular tensions

always shaped Israeli electoral politics.

In 1977, Mr Rabin's first government

was brought down because of religious

protests over a ceremony to receive

an Israeli fighter aircraft on the Sabbath.

The three most famous acts of politi-

cal violence by Israelis during the past

15 years were all carried out by

students from religious seminaries – a grenade thrown into a demonstration of Israelis against the invasion of Lebanon in 1982. Goldstein's massacre in Hebron and now the assassination of Mr Rabin.

How far has Amir succeeded in de-

railing the peace process? Yossi Sarid,

a senior minister, said: "The prime

minister has been assassinated, but the

politics of this government have not

been assassinated." Mr Peres, who has

been more committed than Mr Rabin

to the peace process but who is less

popular with the electorate, becomes

prime minister. Binyamin Netanyahu,

Likud's leader, will tone down his

opposition to withdrawal and Pal-

estinian self-rule. To stand a chance of

winning the next election, he needs to

refute accusations that his overheated

attack on Mr Rabin's government

created the atmosphere in which the

assassination took place.

This gives Mr Peres room to man-

oeuvre in the short term. He could

even try to capitalise on the discus-

ing of the far right by holding a snap

election in three months' time – though this could delay the withdrawal process. This would be a dangerous manoeuvre. Israel's divisions about Palestinian self-rule will not go away.

In Mr Rabin the Labour Party has lost its best vote-winner. It will try to persuade voters that opposition to the peace process is a vote for the politics of Amir, but it may not succeed.

At the same time, the agreements with the Palestinians have their own momentum, even if they are not very popular with either side. Polls show that a majority of Israelis dislike and distrust Mr Arafat, but a majority also feel they must go on talking to him. They do not necessarily want to with-

Agreements with the Palestinians have their own momentum, even if they are unpopular

draw, but they also do not want to face the alternative – which is to fight.

Many Palestinians are equally unimpressed. Israel will still have overall military control of the West Bank. But there is a deep desire to see Israeli troops withdraw, even if it is only to the edge of town. Mr Arafat may not have got Palestinians what they want, but he has won them more than they had before. His opponents have failed to mobilise popular support, despite the many failings of Mr Arafat's authoritarian government. Ordinary Palestinians do not believe there is an alternative policy. Leaders of Hamas, the largest extremist Islamic organisation, admit they are in disarray despite their campaign of Israeli bus bombings that has caused great anguish to the Jewish state.

The distress of the bus bombings, however great, was nothing compared to yesterday's shock of violence by one Jew against another Jew. Liberal Israelis were yesterday hoping the trauma would discredit the opposition to the peace process and the messianic religious zealots alike. Some settler leaders sounded abashed by the consequences of their rhetoric. But this is probably only temporary. The divisions that led to the assassination are too deep to be overcome. In the past, friction between Israel and the outside world masked – both to foreigners and to Israelis themselves – the deep tensions within the country, which on Saturday exploded into violence. Along with Mr Rabin will be buried the idea that Jewish communal solidarity makes Israel different and more united than other states.

by Tony Reeve and Steve Way

Generation Why



Sport defies the US game plan

My eye was caught by a headline in the *International Herald Tribune* the other day, saying "British Miss Point of NBA Circus". I had no idea what this meant. So, of course, I read the story. That is why one reads foreign papers like the *Tribune* – to learn. Apparently, several top basketball teams had arrived in London, sponsored by McDonald's, to stage a tournament. But not enough people had turned out to watch. So the *Tribune* had run a story saying that we British missed the point of basketball.

In fact, as the writer, Ian Thomsen, pointed out, basketball is already big on the Continent, so it is only the British, or the Europeans, who cannot see the point. The British seem to believe, says Thomsen, that basketball is essentially too easy, with goals dealt back and forth like cards from a deck. On the other side of the ocean, World Cup or not, Americans scoff at the idea of soccer games with no scoring at all. But the British majority, who believe staunchly in the less-is-more of soccer, will probably grow used to fast breaks and alley-oops just like they have got used to Big Macs, car phones, "call-waiting" and multi-channel cable television.

It is not often you find a sportswriter using a column to score points off other cultures, and I feel almost inclined to defend the British here, until I realised that what Thomsen was doing was not attacking the British, but defending the Americans. The Americans have been desperate for many years to have one of their sports accepted abroad. They are conscious that there are games in the world like football, cycling and rugby which mean a lot to a lot of people except in America. They are aware that many games popular in the United States, such as golf and tennis, do not have American origins. They are conscious that the few games which are indigenous to America have never found favour outside. So when the British do not turn up to watch basketball, it irks them.

It irks them that the Americans have never managed to invent a game which has gone on to sweep around the world. American football ... baseball ... basketball ... cheer-leading ... ice hockey ... all of these have achieved a foothold outside the US, but have never really flourished away from the home belt. So, the Americans scratch their heads and look on amazed as the rest of the world persists in loving football, with its low scoring rate and sometimes no scoring rate.

They cannot see how any game which does not produce a lot of points, nor goals, nor

Burmese game called chinlon but, as I do not have access to a non-stop sports channel, I may be behind the times here

Judging from Thomsen's list of things I am supposed to be used to, I certainly am behind the times. I have not got used to Big Macs. I hate Big Macs. I have not got used to car phones and multi-channel cable television.

And I am not even sure what "call-waiting" is. If, as I suspect, it is the unbearably smug woman, like a sort of female version of Michael Howard, who answers your telephone call with the message along the lines of "The person you have dialled knows you are calling but is talking to someone far more interesting, so you will have to wait a while, won't you?", then no, I have not got used to call-waiting and I personally would like to come round and grab call-waiting round the neck and strangle the living daylights out of call-waiting...

I am sorry. I have fallen prey to the temptation to score points off the Yanks. But at least it shows I'm wrong. There is one sport that originated in the US, to spread throughout the world and become played everywhere: America-bashing. It is an easy game, too high-scoring to be really significant, but it is still a lot of fun.

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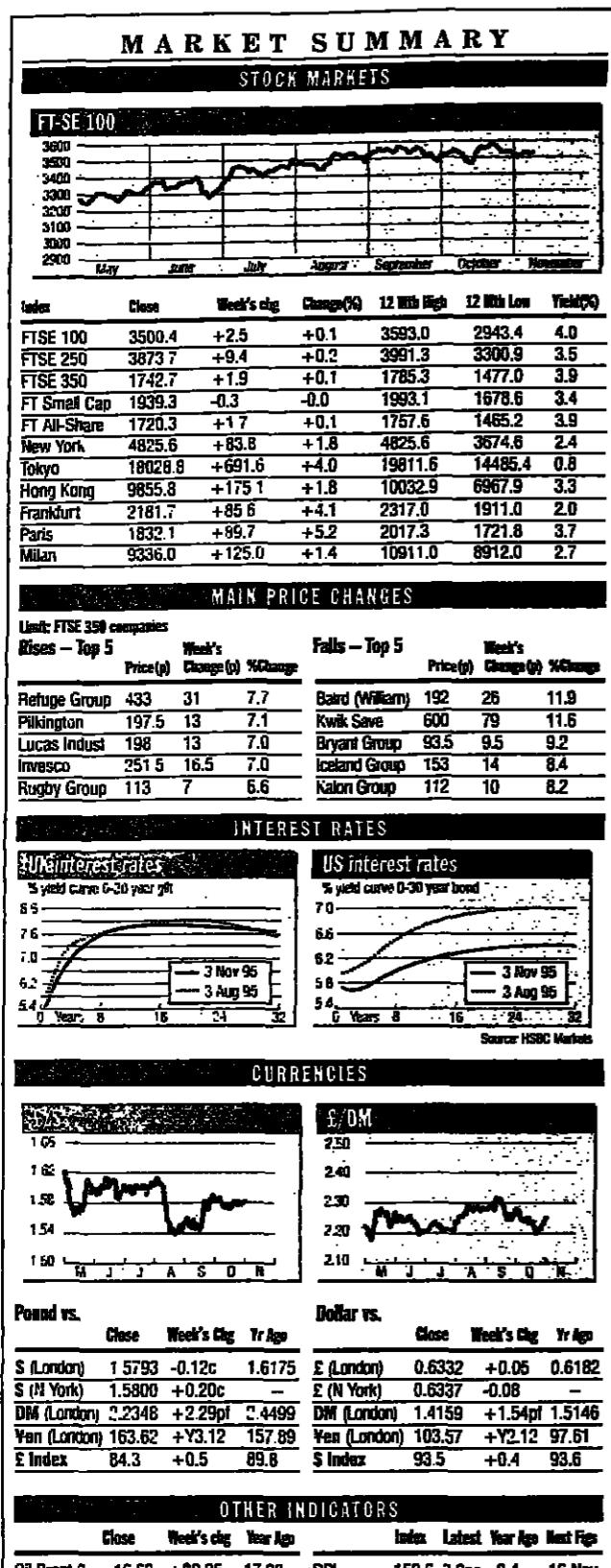
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CITY & BUSINESS EDITOR: JEREMY WARNER



IN BRIEF

Amerada ready to pipe in the West

Amerada Hess, the independent gas company, is poised to supply tens of thousands of private customers in Devon, Cornwall and Somerset with its own gas supplies, promising to cut at least 15 per cent off their bills. The company says the reduction, worth £50 a year for an average two-bedroom terrace, will be delivered via British Gas pipes with all meters, emergency and safety arrangements being unaffected. Amerada is also guaranteeing to peg prices at their current levels for at least two years.

The company's move into household gas supply follows a long battle to force British Gas to abandon its own monopoly in the sector. Last year, the Government gave independent suppliers the green light to supply households, despite a Monopolies and Mergers Commission ruling that this should not take place until the end of the century.

Homeowners feeling better

Homeowners across the UK are increasingly optimistic about the housing market, according to a survey by Birmingham Mid-shires Building Society. The society's "feel-good" index shows the number of people looking to move home in the next 12 months has risen significantly in the third quarter.

Victrex to float at £120m

Victrex, the plastics company, is preparing to float on the Stock Exchange, with a market capitalisation of up to £120m. The Lancashire-based company recorded a 45 per cent rise in operating profits to £10.2m, on turnover of £31.3m, in the year ending September 1995.

British holiday shortage

One in nine British workers receives no paid holidays, according to a study by Francis Green, a professor at Leeds University School of Business and Economic Studies. Part-time and temporary staff or those working in small workplaces are most likely not to get holiday pay. Professor Green's survey also shows that British workers are the only ones in Europe to have no legal right to paid holidays.

Call for spending cuts

Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, could cut up to £3bn off the tax bill, allowing him to lop a penny off the basic rate of income tax, by cutting spending and reducing next year's contingency reserve, according to Roger Bootle, chief economist at HSBC Greenhill. However, Alan Davies, Barclays's chief economist, said unless any tax cuts were matched by public spending reductions, interest rates would be forced up.

TDI wins Irish advertising contract

TDI, the UK's top transport advertising firm, has been awarded a five-year licence to run all transport advertising in the Republic of Ireland. The contract gives TDI one third of all outdoor advertising in the Republic. The company's 150,000 UK sites generate about £30m in sales.

Property market awaits Budget

Property buyers and sellers are waiting to see whether this month's Budget will have an impact on their investments, according to the Richard Ellis research consultancy. In the short term the market will not suffer, irrespective of whether steps are taken to boost confidence. The consultancy's October monthly index shows average initial yield rose from 8.5 to 8.6 per cent.

Companies stay open to EMU

Only a fifth of British companies believe the door should be firmly shut on European monetary union, according to a survey commissioned from Mori by the CBI and the British Chambers of Commerce. Due to be published today, the survey is expected to be challenged by the Institute of Directors.

Privatisation: Government urged to scrap golden share and change rules on property profits

Railtrack seeks new sweeteners

PETER RODGERS
AND CHRISTIAN WOLMAR

Railtrack is fighting to make its flotation next year more attractive to the City by arguing that it should be allowed to keep some of the profits it makes on property development, and pressing the Government not to retain a golden share that would allow ministers to block takeovers.

The moves follow the disclosure in Saturday's *Independent* that the Government is set to give the railways an additional subsidy of £100m to cover the costs of Railtrack's inability to keep services running on time.

All three measures are seen as important to boosting the value of Railtrack when it is floated next April or May – after a long period in which City estimates of the company's value have more than halved from an initial guess of as much as £4bn.

Under rail privatisation legislation, the company is due to hand any profits on property development back to the Government as they can be used to reduce the train operating companies' track access charges.

But Railtrack has told John Swift, the rail regulator, that there will be no incentive to develop trackside property if its shareholders do not receive a part of the action.

Although British Rail kept a large number of properties in public ownership, Railtrack was handed a considerable amount of land needed for operational use of the railways, including the stations. Much of this is certain to be developed when the property market recovers.

Railtrack's opposition to a golden share is thought to be

based on the fact that this would depress the value of the company because it would remove any takeover premium.

At the likely flotation price of up to £2bn, Railtrack would be an easy mouthful for a large company to swallow and there would be enormous embarrassment for the Government if, for example, the bidder were a foreign railway operator.

Railtrack's hostility to golden shares follows a statement from Professor Stephen Littledale, the electricity regulator, last month that it had been a mistake for the Government to retain a golden share in the regional electricity companies. This contributed to the undervaluing of the companies when they were sold.

Railtrack is also believed to be arguing strongly for a flotation of 100 per cent of its shares, although the Government has so far committed itself only to selling 51 per cent or more. Department of Transport sources have said 51 per cent is the minimum.

The main argument put forward within Railtrack for a sale of the entire company is that it would reduce the political risk and potential disruption from an incoming Labour government, which could retake control by buying 2 per cent if only 51 per cent were in private hands.

It has also emerged that the Government and its advisers are considering a tender offer to institutions as one option for the Railtrack sale, because it might produce higher revenues than a public offer for sale. A proportion, perhaps 20 per cent, might still be kept back for the public at a discount to the tender price.

The additional £100m subsidy would be funnelled to Railtrack through supplementary track access charges paid to the company by the train operators. It is to compensate for the financial risk to Railtrack of meeting tough new performance targets set by Mr Swift, which will

increase the volatility of its profits and reduce the value of its shares.

Half the agreements on performance monitoring between Railtrack and the 25 train companies have been signed, with the remainder due to be completed by Christmas. It is a vi-

tal pre-requisite of the privatisation that these deals are sewn up since the performance regimes represent one of the uncertainties surrounding Railtrack's financial strength.

While Railtrack could lose a substantial proportion of its income – believed to be up to 10

per cent – the extent of the losses will be capped, and if Railtrack performs better than expected, it will receive extra money.

This capping was insisted upon by Railtrack as otherwise the risk would have been unacceptable to the private sector.

Two bidders drop out of ITN share sale

MATHEW HORSMAN
Media Editor

Two potential buyers of shares in Independent Television News have taken themselves out of the running, jeopardising the planned sale of a 32 per cent stake in the ITV news provider.

Lazard Frères, the investment bank, has confirmed that they will not take up shares offered by Lazard Frères, the investment bank, on behalf of Granada and Carlton, and the media companies.

Ward Thomas, chairman of YTV, said uncertainty over YTV's status as sole supplier of news to ITV made it impossible to agree a price for the shares. At this stage, we don't know what the price of the shares should be. We do not know if a second news provider might be appointed, and how that would affect the price of the shares.

The competing supply bid has put pressure on Granada and Carlton, which must reduce their holdings in ITV from 36 per cent to a maximum of 20 per cent each by the end of the year to meet government ownership limits. The excessive stakes were the result of takeovers by Granada and Carlton of LWT and Central respectively.

But the ITN contract negotiations are scheduled to begin only in 1996. There are no plans to bring the talks forward, despite the uncertainty surrounding the share sale.

An insider at Granada said ITV and YTV, both of which have complained to the ITC about the new news service on the basis of quality and cost, are merely trying to drive down the price of ITN shares to buy them on the cheap.

The companies have no intention of subscribing to Sky News. This is just a campaign to force a lower price from ITN for its news coverage or to drive down the price of ITN shares, "the source said. It was also suggested that HTV and YTV may be trying to force the sellers to dump shares directly into the market, in order to buy stakes at lower prices later.

Keith Henry, National Pow-

Bank to tighten derivatives trade

DIANE COYLE
Economics Correspondent

The Bank of England will shortly be asking banks to report additional information on their trade in derivatives to strengthen its supervision of the controversial financial products.

Following the Barings report, a senior director of every City bank will have to sign all supervisory returns to the Bank and approve the theoretical models that traders use in assessing the risk of derivatives.

Banks make widely different assessments of the risks involved in a particular type of derivative, over-the-counter options, according to an article in the Bank's forthcoming *Quarterly Bulletin*.

An OTC option is a contract tailor-made for the customer, offering the right to buy or sell an underlying asset at a pre-set price on or before a certain date.

Companies can use options to hedge the risk involved in other

transactions, but when the strategy goes wrong the losses can be limitless.

As there is no readily available information about how the risk of OTC options is assessed, the Bank of England asked 35 banks in London about their practices.

Reporting the results of a survey of banks involved in this trade earlier this year, the authors say the banks were aware of the uncertainty involved in assessing the risk of OTC options, but it is an issue which the Bank, as a supervisor, will need to continue to monitor.

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useful in identifying several banks that were pricing products very differently from the rest of the market.

Banks trading in derivatives will be required to provide additional information about their activities to comply with the EU's capital adequacy directive, which comes into force on 1 January. Banks will have to allocate capital according to risk and will be forced to report their trading books in detail.

They will also be compelled to use methods for measuring derivatives risks and pricing the contracts that are approved by the Bank of England.

The new requirements will be costly, but banks recognise that they have little choice but to comply.

£500m Welsh plan at National Power

MARY FAGAN
Industrial Correspondent

National Power, the generator bidding £2.8bn for Southern Electric, will safeguard or create more than 1,350 jobs thanks to a £500m investment in the conversion of a South Wales power station.

The lion's share of the output, at the Pembroke oil-fired station, will be for equipment including sulphur scrubbing systems and special burners to clean up emissions from the plant to meet tight pollution regulations.

The power plant is to burn oil, which environmentalists have described as the world's dirtiest fuel.

The project is subject to planning consent from the Government and final authorisation from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Pollution. The conversion would protect 250 existing full-time jobs at Pembroke and create a further 100. In addition it would employ more than 1,000 people during the construction period.

Keith Henry, National Pow-

er's chief executive, said: "The future of the plant relies entirely on getting the go-ahead. The cost of the fuel makes it very competitive and I believe that this marks a very positive step in the development of the UK energy industry."

Mr Henry said National Power hopes to go ahead next year with a fifth combined-cycle gas turbine power station at Staythorpe in Nottinghamshire. The company has two CCGTs in operation, one about to come on stream and a fourth under construction alongside an existing plant at Didcot in Oxfordshire.

Commenting on the takeover bid, Mr Henry rejected suggestions that National Power would try to buy other regional electricity firms if it won

Southern Electric.

He said the company planned to become a national supplier of electricity once the market opened up to competition in 1998, but added: "I believe we can do all we want with Southern. I can honestly say that I am not looking at any other regional firm."

Network

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See pages 15 - 19
section two

Every Monday in the
INDEPENDENT
section two

الإمارات



GAVYN DAVIES

'Several factors have tipped the argument on base rates in the optimists' favour, at least for a while'

Four reasons why base rates could be cut

I somewhat surprised myself last week by agreeing with the majority of my colleagues at the Treasury Forecasting Panel that some easing in monetary policy might be desirable in the next few months. This change of view came both from recent evidence about inflation pressures in the economy, and also from being persuaded by some of the arguments advanced by Patrick Minford and Tim Congdon at the Panel meetings.

More of that later, but first what future is there for the Panel itself? By the end of this year, the original seven members will be down to three, partly because of the rotation system of enforced retirements, and partly because of career changes. The Chancellor will shortly need to make some new appointments to take the Panel through the election, and even then across an unbridged intellectual divide.

This year's reports have produced clear majority recommendations on a series of important issues. Four out of six members recommended against UK membership of EMU in its current form. The same number recommended that the Bank of England should be given autonomy in setting interest rates, within the constraints of the inflation objective set by the Government. Five out of six opposed cuts in income tax in the Budget. And all six said that interest rates

prepared can be as painful as pulling teeth, and this often shows in the finished product. Some of the early reports were little more than six or seven disparate views stitched together. But the 1995 reports have seen an improvement. The two special topics discussed this year – European Monetary Union and the framework of domestic monetary policy – have not produced unanimous reports, but at least they attempted to confront the main areas of disagreement among economists on crucial questions. As far as I am aware, the Panel is the only forum in this country where economists of different persuasions are forced to try to reconcile differing approaches, rather than throwing darts at each other across an unbridged intellectual divide.

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should come down if the fiscal stance is left broadly unchanged after the Chancellor's November package. If not full unanimity, then certainly not the undisciplined cacophony of which the Panel is often accused.

This brings us back to monetary policy and inflation. Patrick Minford and, to a lesser extent, Tim Congdon have been arguing throughout the life of the Panel that inflation would remain very subdued for several more years. Though both are seen as "monetarists", and both believe that disinflationary forces are in the ascendant at present, there are crucial differences between them.

The Minford view is that the Thatcherite supply side reforms of the past 15 years have greatly increased the output potential of the economy, and there is chronic under-employment in the labour market. He therefore calls for large cuts in taxes and base rates to take advantage of these supply side gains. The Congdon view is that there is no real evidence of large supply side gains, but that output is some distance below trend. He is opposed to further fiscal easing, but believes base rates could be reduced without jeopardising the Government's inflation target.

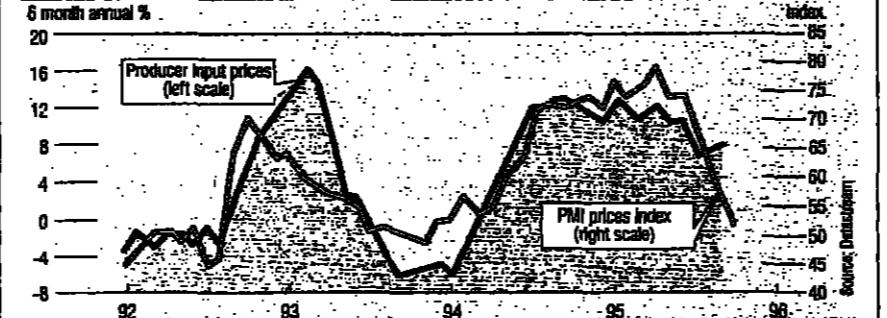
In 1994, a succession of favourable surprises

on the retail prices front seemed to strengthen the optimists' view of the inflation process, but this year their RPI forecasts have proved too low. The optimists vehemently opposed the 1.5 per cent rise in base rates last year, without which the increase in underlying inflation this year would undoubtedly have been much more pronounced. So it is far from clear that their view has been fully vindicated.

Nevertheless, several factors have tipped the argument on base rates in the optimists' favour, at least for a while. First, growth in the economy has slowed in response to last year's monetary tightening. Although this has only pushed GDP growth fractionally below trend so far, the build-up in stocks has reached worrying proportions, and there is a rising possibility of a pause in activity for a couple of quarters as these stocks are shed.

Second, there has been some evidence of improved underlying performance in the labour market. The Goldsmith Sachs wage equation suggests average earnings should now be increasing at an annual rate of about 5 per cent, given the decline in unemployment. In fact, earnings have risen only 3.5 per cent, a difference which might indicate a short-term break for the better.

Producer input prices



6 month annual %

index

Producer output price inflation



6 month annual %

index

Axminster, enthusiasm and the Conservative Party are at the heart of things for the dyslexic who once wanted to be a barrister



Man of many roles: Sir Philip Harris, innovator, ideas man and skilled persuader, at one of his many retail outlets

Photograph: Glynn Griffiths

Carpet king continues a long roll

Sir Philip Harris is sitting in the boardroom of his company's head office in Rainham, Essex, but finding it difficult to stay still. One minute he is bouncing up to show off a new shop design, the next he is dashing out to ask his secretary for photographs.

"What do you think of this design then?" See what we've done with these signs. We've really parked them up a bit of yellow ... mmm," he adds, agreeing with himself.

He talks quickly with the enthusiasm of the born salesman and is in buoyant form. His carpet business is on a roll and so too, he believes, is his other great love – the Conservative Party, for which he is a key fundraiser.

Carpets first. As the Axminster king of Britain, Sir Philip had already made one carpeting fortune when he secured £70m from the sale of Harris Queensway in 1988. Now 53, he is doing it all again with Carpetright, a rapidly expanding carpet group whose low prices and high volumes have helped it snatch a 14 per cent share of the UK carpet market.

He is now rolling out a new larger format Carpet Depot with which he hopes to build the group's share to 20 per cent.

As for the Conservatives, Sir Philip has been enthused by the Tory Party conference and the recent dinner at Claridge's to celebrate the 70th birthday of Baroness Thatcher, who awarded him his knighthood in 1985. He has continued his top-level connections. John Major and his wife, Norma, were guests at his villa in the south of France over the summer.

He says: "The economy is improving all the time. Unemployment is coming down and we have a government that is listening. I think the 5,000 more

policeman on the beat is very exciting."

Earlier this year he was taking £5 bets that the Tories would win the next election. "I'd double that now," he says. As deputy chairman of the party's treasury committee he is helping to build a £25m fighting fund at Central Office for the next election. The party's troublesome overdraft is down to less than £10m, he says.

A skilled persuader, Sir Philip was thought to have been instrumental in securing a £4m interest-free loan from Graham Kirkham, the wealthy head of DFS furniture, last year. Mr Kirkham last month raised £74m from the sale of shares in the company. He can expect another call from Sir Philip soon.

If he finds the time, that is. Sir Philip and his tight-knit management team have spent the past few months working on the Carpet Depot format which will be expanded aggressively.

Carpet Depot is a huge, warehouse-style store that stocks carpets starting at prices as low as £11.99 a square yard and up to around £50. This is upmarket territory not yet exploited by Carpetright.

"What do you think?" he inquires, holding up an artist's impression of the new design, complete with day-glo orange shop front. "Good, isn't it? I think it's one of the best ideas I've had."

The first outlet opened in the Thurrock retail park in Essex in September and a further two have already been added. There will be eight by next year and 70 within four years. "It's going to take the department stores like John Lewis head on."

Formed in 1988 and floated

on the stock market two years ago, Carpetright has already established a chain of more than 200 outlets and consistently bucked the sluggish retail trend with spectacular profits growth and a £20m cash pile.

"I spent six months looking at Europe but decided against it. France looked too tough and Germany was difficult to get into. So I've decided to concentrate on Britain."

"Everyone said Carpetright would run out of steam two years after we floated, but I think we're just about to gather

steam."

Initially, the plan was to build a chain of 200 stores. After new research he plans a chain of 250 outlets in Britain plus a further 10 in Northern Ireland.

Carpetright has been opening a new outlet every 12 days and the introduction of Carpet Depot will be its third format. There will be no more, Sir Philip assures.

The original Carpetright stores remain the core, with 190 outlets and growing. Earlier this year the group started opening Premier Carpets concessions in branches of MFI and Sainsbury's Homebase. So far there are 10 outlets, but this will grow to 120 within four years.

Carpet Depot is also going to get the rapid roll-out treatment. A chain of 70 is planned over the next four years.

However, there are concerns in the City that the new format will cannibalise the core Carpetright chain. Sir Philip dismisses these worries: "Carpetright is still the big earner. We won't neglect that.

But the Depot format is different and if we didn't do it someone else would."

He has a reputation as a tough employer. Under-performers are weeded out quickly. Loyal henchmen stay for years. John Kitching, Carpetright's sales director, joined Sir Philip for a summer more than 20 years ago and has stayed.

He says: "His enthusiasm is infectious. That's what motivates people. If things go wrong he can be ruthless, but he's not one of those people who throw

their weight about for the sake of it."

Aside from carpets and Conservatives

Sir Philip's main hobby is show-jumping. He owns four top horses trained by David Broome and ridden by Michael Whitaker. Though privately owned rather than corporately sponsored, most have carpeting overtones such as Midnight Madness, the name of the Carpetright sale.

"I do a bit of riding but I haven't done any this year be-

cause I've been so busy. My real aim is for one of the horses to win an Olympic gold medal."

Few would deny him such expensive hobbies. Born in Streatham, south London, he left school at 15 to take over the family's three carpet shops after his father died. "I wanted to be a barrister but I'm dyslexic so that wasn't possible. But I have no regrets."

He gradually expanded the chain through the 1960s and 1970s aided by the rise in home ownership and rising living standards. In 1977 he took over the Queensway furniture chain and in 1983 was named Hambro Businessman of the Year.

In 1988 when the business had expanded to include the Hamleys toy shop it was acquired by the doomed Lowndes Queensway buy-in.

Sir Philip denies that he is motivated by an ambition to make Carpetright bigger than Harris Queensway and prove wrong those in the City who question his record. But those close to him say he has a desire to prove he can do it again.

Nigel Cope

As the Italian scandal season gets into its stride, a spiralling budget deficit is forcing a sharp change in what is acceptable

A sick economy shakes out the fake invalids

It is scandal season in Italy again. In the past month, a Rome investigating magistrate has discovered that as many as 50,000 "fake invalids" are collecting disability benefits through cushy jobs in the public sector, particularly in the post office. And several thousand officers in the armed forces have confessed they have been systematically inflating their expense claims and accepting bribes to exempt the children of friends from national service.

The university system, too, is under investigation as evidence emerges of competitive exams for tenured professorships being rigged, and state money being wasted on faculties that provide plentiful jobs but are of negligible educational value.

At first sight, such reports seem no more than chaotic. After all, anyone who knows the country is aware that such scandals have been going on for years. But the fact that they are coming to light now is more than mere coincidence. These scandals bear witness to a tough fact of Italian life: that endemic corruption is a luxury the country can no longer afford.

Everyone knows Italy's public finances are hopelessly in

debt. The state has been running a budget deficit for so long that overall public debt represents more than 130 per cent of GDP. Worse still, investor confidence in Italy is so shaky that the Treasury is forced to service nearly two-thirds of this debt through short-term bonds.

It is a perilous exercise, since the government is having to repay bonds faster than it can afford to and has no alternative but to issue yet more short-term bonds to cover its shortfall.

The bribes companies were expected to pay were too expensive

This is clearly an untenable situation, which explains the single-mindedness of the Prime Minister, Lamberto Dini, in bringing the deficit rapidly under control. In April he made an initial £20.000bn (£309m) worth of cuts through tax increases and reductions in public spending. Two months later he finalised a reform of the bloated pensions system, which had been eating up a staggering 20 per cent of GDP. His pre-

VIEW FROM ROME

occupation now is to get parliament to approve the 1996 budget with its £32.500bn in further savings before his non-political administration falls victim to another party's squabbling.

But the budget is not the only issue. Italy is being forced to confront every area of public life and re-examine the extravagant habits of the past. The process started three years ago, when the "clean hands" team of magistrates in Milan brought down an entire generation of politicians with their anti-corruption investigations.

Sweeping away the old order was not prompted by any great re-thinking of ethical standards in public life: the bribes large companies were expected to pay were too expensive. With Italy hitting a recession along with the rest of Europe, it was no longer reasonable to pay as much as 60 per cent of a contract's value in kick-backs. The only recourse was to denounce the politicians.

Three years on, the revolution in Italian public life has shifted focus. Before, the target was lar-

geony on a grand scale – politicians who stashed gold ingots under their mattresses and siphoned off chunks of the country's GDP into anonymous accounts in the Far East.

Now, after a period of high instability, it is institutions beyond the strict sphere of politics that are under attack. The investigation into the fake invalids at the post office, for example, was partly motivated by the urgent need to modernise a notoriously wasteful and inefficient public service. Political sources suggest that the magistrates may have been tipped off by post office managers looking for a way to bypass the powerful trade unions and cut as much as a quarter of the 200,000-strong workforce.

The need to eradicate waste and privilege is causing consternation in many areas of Italian life. Workers at La Scala opera house in Milan, for example, are threatening to call off the opening night of the new season because they see the management's attempts to cut costs as an attack not just on their lifestyles, but on the very

culture of arts administration in Italy. So cushioned have they been for so long, they do not understand why the state is no longer prepared to plunge billions of lire into opera each year and get back less than a tenth of its investment.

The changing mentality is beginning to have an effect on the economic big league. Two months ago Gianni Agnelli, chairman of Fiat, and the head of the Milanese merchant bank Mediobanca, Enrico Cuccia,

announced a plan to create the country's second-biggest industrial conglomerate by merging two loss-making groups under their control, Montedison-Ferruzzi and Gemina. The deal had all the hallmarks of traditional Italian business practice, a piece of economic engineering worked out between old friends behind closed doors. The political establishment was not consulted; neither were minority share-

holders. A decade ago, they would have got away with it because they were powerful enough to block all opposition. But times have changed.

Within a few weeks, magistrates and tax inspectors were crawling all over Gemina after discovering an £800m hole in the books of the company's publishing subsidiary, Rizzoli, and the merger deal was called off. This week Mediobanca received another slap in the face after it bought more than 10 per cent of the shares in Montedison-Ferruzzi's holding company on the sly. The Milan bourse regulator took everyone by surprise by forcing Mediobanca to make a formal takeover offer and buy 10.8 per cent more of its shares on the open market.

Italy's revolution is far from complete. It still has no stable political structure, and its economy is crying out for proper regulation. But these recent episodes suggest a start is being made. Penury may not be the noblest reason for cleaning up public life, but as long as the drive to improve public finances persists, it seems there is a real chance of bringing about lasting change.

Andrew Gumbel

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INSTRUMENTS FOR PROFESSIONALS

TODAY

Healthcare. Whitecroft, Voyeur European Smaller. Annual meetings: Goodwin.

Companies
A busy fortnight for company results to show half-year figures from British Airways, expected to show half-year profits of £425m, up a fifth. **Finals:** Fleming Chinese Inv, Lynx Holdings, Stratagem Group.

Interims: Associated British Foods, Blacks Leisure, British Airways, Business Post Group, Johnson Fry Sec Utilities, Prowling, Safefland, Seton

British Airways

480
460
440
420
400
380
360
340
NDJFMAMJASON
Share price, pence

TOMORROW

Profits before tax of almost £400m from Marks & Spencer, up a tenth, will provide the customary reassuring message after the recent jitters on the high street. Questions regarding sales growth and the returns from new space are also likely to be raised, however. In July, the company confirmed trading remained difficult and said the weather was unhelpful.

WEDNESDAY

Companies
BAT is expected to have done relatively well in its US tobacco market which has seen flagging volumes but resilient

Economics
Advance energy data (Oct.)

Finals: Allied Domecq, Anglian Water, Broadgate Inv Trust, Mercury Keystone Investment Trust, MMT Computing, Saracen Value Trust, Group, WEF Group.

Interims: Amersham International, Bath Press Group, Boustead, British Petroleum (Q3), British Sky Broadcasting (Q3), Capital Gearing Trust, Hartlepool Water, London Insurance Market, Marks & Spencer, Mercury Asset Management, Montanaro UK Smaller, National Power, Power International, Saracen

Group.

Statistics: index of production (Sep.), cyclical indicators of the UK economy (Oct.).

Financial services will benefit from a smoothed return at Eagle Star. Overall pre-tax profits are forecast by NatWest Securities to improve 22 per cent to £1.76bn in the nine months to September.

Finals: Gartmore European, Hambro Insurance Service, Lowland Inv, Lyons Irish Holdings.

Interims: BAT Industries (Q3), Electrocomponents, First Ireland Inv Co, Fleming Far Eastern, German Investment Trust, Henderson Administration Group, Scottish Power, Vesper Thorncroft.

Annual meetings: Adwest Group, Cantons China Inv & Development, DCS Group, International Biotechnology, Thorntons, FW Thorpe, TNT EGMS: Thorntons

Economics
Bank of England inflation report (Q3).

Companies
The Bank of England issues its quarterly inflation report,

putting interest rate policy into the spotlight.

The Bank is expected to express less concern about inflationary pressures than it did in its August report because of the accumulated evidence that growth has slowed. However, it would be a surprise if it completely retreated from its advice that the Government will not meet its inflation target without an eventual increase in base rates.

The most recent speeches on the economy by Eddie George, Governor of the Bank, and Mervyn King, its chief economist, said the balance of evidence still pointed to higher rates.

Statistics: Index of production for Scotland (Q2), Welsh Agricultural Statistics No 17 (1995), CBI/BSI regional trends survey (Oct.), Bank of England inflation report (Nov.), Bank of England quarterly bulletin (Q3).

ahead of last year's first half. **Finals:** Asset Management Investment Co, Bett Brothers, Burton Group, Orb Estates, Willis Corroon (Q4), Villiers Group.

Interims: Appleby Westward, British Telecom (Q2), Cedar data, Central European, B Elliott, First Ireland Inv (and), Northumbrian Water Group, Porter Chadburn, Regalian Properties, Royal Insurance Holdings (Q3), Staveley Industries, Umeco, Warner Howard.

Annual meetings: Everest Foods, Thorgmorton Dual Trust, Throgmorton 1,000 Trust, Tor IT, Trafford Park Estates, Waterman Partnership, Zambia Copper.

Companies
After the disappointments of the first half, third-quarter figures from Unilever will have benefited from the company's strong position in ice-cream.

This might allow for upgrades to full-year profits. For the first nine months, profits of £786m up 9 per cent, are expected.

Finals: J Bibby & Sons, Interims: Banner Homes, Investment Co, Quadrant Group, Somic, Unilever.

Economics
Today brings the key overseas statistic, US producer prices for October. Most analysts expect them to have been near flat. Statistics: New Earnings Survey Part E: 1995, analyses by region and by age group. New Earnings Survey Part F: 1995. Distribution of hours; joint signs of improvement.

distribution of earnings and hours; analyses of earnings and hours for part-time women and employees, labour market trends, travel trends.

FRIDAY

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THE WEEK AHEAD

THURSDAY

UK industrial production

SHARE PRICE DATA

Prices are in sterling except where stated. The yield is last year's dividend, grossed up by 20 per cent, as a percentage of the share price. The price/earnings (PE) ratio is the share price divided by last year's earnings per share, excluding exceptional items.

Other details: x Ex-rights; z Ex-dividends; a Analysts; w Unlisted Securities Market; S Suspended; pp Partly Paid; pn Nil Paid Shares.

Source: Finstar.

THE INDEPENDENT INDEX

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INTEREST RATES

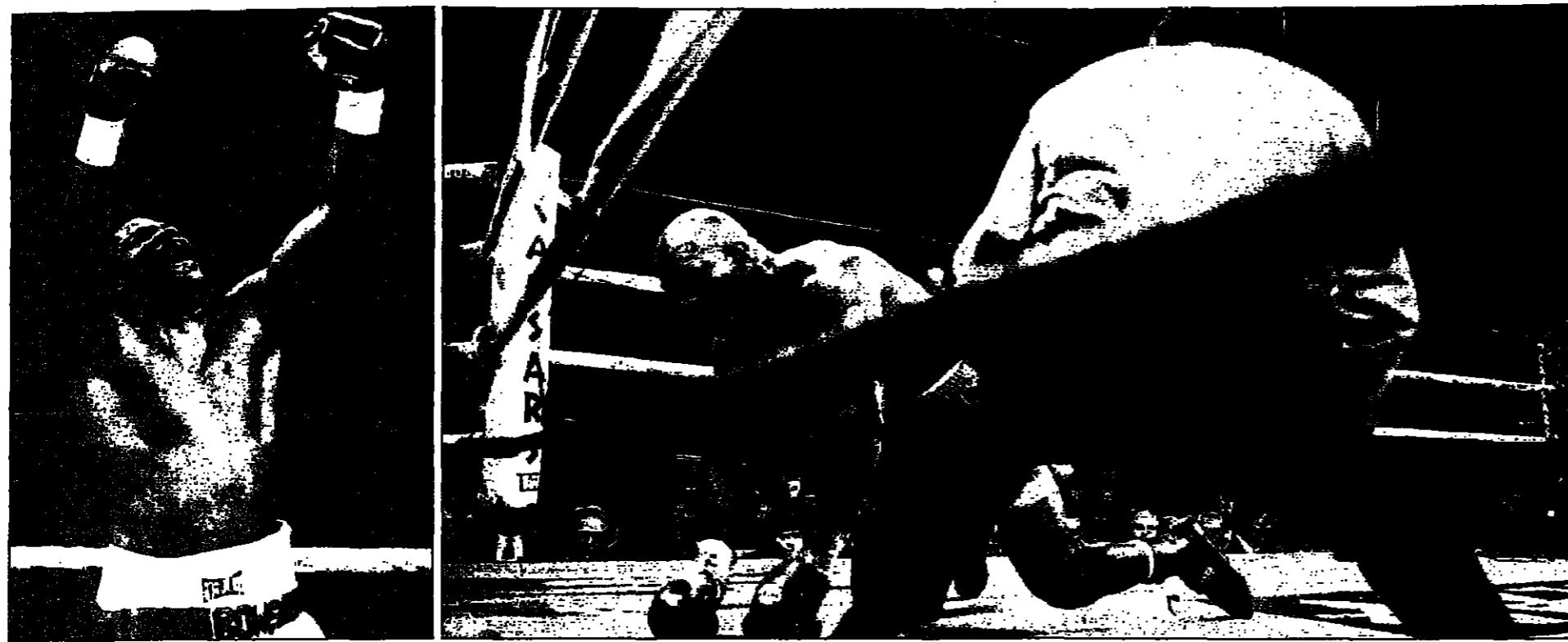
UK 6.75% Germany 3.50% US Prime 8.75% Discount 0.50% France 5.00% Lombard 5.50% Belgium 5.25% Discount 3.50% Intervention 5.00% Canada 5.75% Central 4.00% Italy 9.00% Prime 7.75% Discount 6.18% Spain 10-Day Repo 9.25% Switzerland 2.00% Netherlands 3.70% Denmark 5.00% Japan Lombard 4.125%

Source: Finstar.

RELEASER

sport

BOXING: Heartbreaker Holyfield is stopped in the eighth. Ken Jones reports from Las Vegas



Riddick Bowe celebrates (left) after stopping Evander Holyfield (main picture) in the eighth round at Caesars Palace Las Vegas on Saturday

Photographs: AP

Henman has edge over Rusedski

Tennis

JOHN ROBERTS
reports from Telford

Greg Rusedski could only grin and bear it as Tim Henman recovered from 1-6 0-1 to triumph in three sets and become the youngest holder of the men's singles title at the Guardian Di-rect National Championships yesterday.

The 21-year-old Henman is growing accustomed to quick turn-arounds. Having completed an astonishing two weeks, winning singles and doubles titles in Seoul and Shropshire and coping with time zones, jet lag and returning the fastest serve in the game with interest, he is due to set forth again this morning for a tournament in China.

This time last year, Henman visited the Nationals on crutches, having broken his right leg. He had restored himself as the nation's brightest prospect before the Canadian-born Rusedski was recruited as Britain's No 1 in May, and two contrasting matches during the weekend have underlined the Oxford player's progress.

Rusedski double-faulted 10 times in total, beckoning Henman into the match a second time after breaking for 2-1 in the second set, and then losing his serve at the start of the third.

Henman, in contrast, dropped only three points in his last six service games after taking a 3-2 lead in the second set and demolished Rusedski by winning seven consecutive games. He completed the victory after 80 minutes with a service winner and two aces.

"Tim deserved to win for sure," Rusedski said. "He showed a lot of character and a lot of belief. I tried too hard to serve well today. When I try too hard I get nervous and tight."

Apart from the other qualities displayed during an encouraging week, Henman showed healthy perspective in his attitude towards his success here. "Don't get me wrong, winning the national title makes me very proud, but it doesn't do anything for my ranking. I'm now due to play in the smallest Challenger [tournament] there is."

Clare Wood, the top seed, won the women's singles title for a third time, having utilised her experience to outplay the 17-year-olds, Jasmine Choudhury and Amanda Janes, and the 23-year-old, Sam Smith.

Sparkling Sampras

Pete Sampras celebrated his return to the top of the tennis world with a stylish straight-sets victory over Boris Becker in the Paris Open final yesterday.

Sampras, the top seed, who had already done enough in this tournament to reclaim the No 1 spot he lost to his fellow American, Andre Agassi, last April, stayed cool to counter a determined Becker and win 7-6, 6-4, 6-4.

After a tense first set which ended in a tie-break, the rematch of last July's Wimbledon final, won in four sets by Sampras, turned out to be a spectacular one-sided battle.

Becker, the third seed who was seeking a fourth win in this event, gave his all but there was

little the German could do against the elegant American, at his brilliant best under the floodlights of the high-tech Bercy arena.

Victory earned Sampras 380 ATP Tour points to give him a clear lead in the world rankings ahead of Agassi, who was unable to defend his title because of a muscle strain.

"I'm pleased with the way I played," Sampras said. "I don't think I can play much better than that."

"This win gives me a lot of confidence going on to Frankfurt," he added, referring to the ATP Tour World Championship, featuring the world's top eight players, which starts on 14 November.

Giddins applies the brakes

Cricket

Karachi Combined XI 204
England A 47-0

Intrigue is so much a way of life in heavyweight boxing that the future was made no clearer at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas late on Saturday when Riddick Bowe stopped Evander Holyfield in the eighth round of a thrilling encounter.

Although Bowe's manager, Rock Newman, said yesterday that he had entered into negotiations with Don King for a fight against Mike Tyson some time next year, Lennox Lewis threw down a challenge to the victor at ringside. This despite the further action his associates are taking in a New Jersey court room today to prevent Frank Bruno from defending the World Boxing Council championship against Tyson next year. "I still believe in my right to challenge Bruno [it was rejected by a British judge last week] but I'm ready to fight Bowe," Lewis said.

It is an idea that appeals hugely to the American cable television network, Home Box Office, that has both men under contract and whose chief executive, Seth Abraham, telephoned London early yes-

terday to speak with Lewis's chief advisor, Panos Eliades. "I repeat that we are prepared to assist Lennox in his efforts to be confirmed as Bruno's challenger but Bowe and Lewis would be a tremendous attraction," Abraham said.

In arguing that there will be an important principle at stake in New Jersey today, Lewis's manager, Frank Maloney, did not appear to share common ground with his fighter. Because of the probability that King, on Bruno's behalf, would succeed with a counter-action in Nevada, neither did he speak with any great conviction.

But for sensible intervention, Lewis might have embarrassed himself and brought down a bombardment of criticism by declaring publicly that the third meeting between Bowe and Holyfield was not anything to shout about. "Say that in there [a press conference] and you'll get slaughtered," he was advised by a veteran British boxing writer.

What stood beyond Lewis's perception was that, while there have been better heavyweight

contests, few have done more to advance the sport's traditional nobility. This was especially true of the grace Holyfield showed in defeat after almost causing a sensation in the sixth round with a violent left hook that sent Bowe to the canvas.

When Holyfield saw Bowe lurch to his feet, hanging on to the ropes for support, he sensed that it was all over. Weary by strenuous bouts of in-fighting when giving away more than two stones, he hardly raised his hands in an attempt to complete Bowe's destruction.

"You fight with what you have," Holyfield said. "I gave everything. I had a problem with my right shoulder but I'm not complaining. It's not like I wasn't prepared. He was just better and I thank God for having all my faculties."

You could have cried for Holyfield, he really could, and there were damp eyes in the room when he spoke of rejecting the temptation to go down from a low right in the fifth round for which Bowe was deducted a point by the referee, Joe Cortez. "I thought about it to follow up."

Between the sixth and seventh rounds Bowe's renowned trainer, Eddie Futch, called for an alteration in strategy. "Your right hand is low, so don't stand up against the left hook, duck beneath it," Futch said. By the end of the seventh Holyfield had a 66-65 advantage on all three official scorecards and made another effort on resumption, hooking with both hands. There was more hesitation in Bowe but as Holyfield came in he fell on to a flat

as a way out of there, but it isn't in me to cheat."

That Holyfield was asking too much of his remarkable will and putting himself seriously at risk became quickly evident. By the end of the fourth he was travelling on heavy legs and no hope could be held out for him.

Then, suddenly at the start of the sixth round, Holyfield launched a left hook that carried every ounce of the strength he had left. "It confused me in a big way," Bowe said afterwards. "But I knew it wasn't the way we'd planned things. Fortunately, Evander wasn't able to ask to explain himself.

Before they left the ring, Bowe spoke to Holyfield warmly. "You are my inspiration," he said. "In our minds and hearts you are a champion forever." Later, outside the dressing rooms, they fell into an embrace.

The fact that Bowe survived that blow probably would have finished off the majority of heavyweights is an important consideration, but Lewis gave him little credit. "Frankly, I don't think Bowe had a lot to beat," he said. "Holyfield made the mistake of standing in front of him. He was as easy to hit as a punchbag, but Bowe still had a problem."

George Foreman went further, insisting that Bowe defeated an invalid. "Evander was a sick man," he said. "Bowe struggled to beat a man that sick, so how can people say that he is the best heavyweight?"

The problem for Lewis is that he and his people, particularly the Duvex organisation, Main Events, that has long been at odds with the WBC and its King-friendly president, Jose Sulaiman, are working to different route maps.

A distinct possibility is that even if Home Box Office are able to get negotiations under way, the question of who gets what will prevent Bowe-Lewis happening. Lewis is bound to demand parity in the purse money, which isn't quite how Newman sees things. From the way he spoke yesterday, he is more inclined to seek Tyson as the next opponent for his man.

Using a microphone, Lewis taunted Bowe on Saturday, reminding him that they were due to meet for the undisputed title three years ago until he cast the wretched Bruno out of his corner.

"I'm not going to be a punchbag, but Bowe still had a problem."

They've come far, but will boxing politics again prevent further progress?

Bowe stems the tide of emotion

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Giddins applies the brakes

England A

England A produced another competent day in the field against a Combined XI at the Defence Stadium in Karachi. Losing the toss, they did well to restrict their hastily assembled opponents to 204.

He put on 83 for the third wicket with Azam Khan, and Mahmood Hamid, a promising middle-order batsman, hit 30 of 54 balls, but the rest of the innings folded tamely.

Junaid Salibury led the way with the early wicket of the in-form Shahid Anwar. Although Salibury finished with 4 for 72, the pick of the bowlers was Ed Gid-

dins, who impressed with his accuracy and control, taking a wicket in each of his three spells.

Giddins made the first breakthrough when he bowled Mohammad Ramzan after half an hour.

Shoaib Mohammad, tipped to join the Pakistan Test team in Australia in place of the ailing Saeed Anwar, did his chances no harm with a mature 40 which steamed the inns.

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Salim and May cross swords

Tim May, one of three Australian Test players to accuse Salim Malik of offering bribes, dismissed the former Pakistan captain yesterday in their first direct confrontation on the field since the scandal erupted.

Salim, who was cleared of the bribery charges last month, was stumped for 16 in Pakistan's tour match against South Australia. His departure left Pakistan struggling at 79 for 4 on the fourth and final day at the Adelaide Oval, but an unbeaten century by Basil Ali steered the tourists to a draw in their last match before the first Test.

May, who has threatened to take legal action against anyone who suggests he concocted his charge against Salim, appeared jubilant when he dismissed the veteran right-handed batsman. Early in his spell, May appeared to have words with Salim as the hook that sent him over sideways.

There could have hardly been anyone in the arena who was not aware of Holyfield's dishevelling but, frighteningly, Cortez let Holyfield take two more punches before stopping the contest. In view of recent tragedies Cortez, a vastly experienced official, should be asked to explain himself.

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They've come far, but will boxing politics again prevent further progress?

Osborn hits a hat-trick

Hockey

Paddy Osborn, with three goals,

kept Reading on course for their first National Championship title when they beat St Albans 6-1 to stay on maximum points at the top of the First Division, writes Bill Colwill. Grant Edwards, Jon Watt and Mark Pearn scored the others, with the Saints captain, Andy Halliday, getting their consolation.

Nicky Thompson scored twice as Old Loughorians came

from behind against Hounslow to win 3-1 to hold on to second place. At Saint Hill, Cannock also went a goal down before taking over to win 6-1 with Bobby Crutchley collecting his fourth hat-trick of the season.

In the women's National League on Saturday, a goal from the England manager, Jane Swinnerton-Tons, gave Sutton Canfield a 1-0 win against Doncaster to go top, one point ahead of Houghton who won 4-1 at home to Bracknell.

Torrance challenges

Golf

scored a 69 to add to his first-round 67.

Jimenez leads by two strokes from the Open champion, John Daly (68), and his fellow Americans Craig Stadler (70) and Fuzzy Zoeller (71).

Michael Campbell, of New Zealand, took his first title yesterday when he decisively won the Alfred Dunhill Masters at the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews, Scotland, with a record-equalling final round of 65 in Jakarta.

England to go places

Basketball

Germany, the European champions in 1993,

Trevor Gordon, recalled to the team after missing last month's defeats by Latvia and Estonia while in dispute with Manchester Giants, scored 27 points for his new club Birmingham Bullets in their 127-98 win at Newcastle Comets. Gordon is an essential addition, as Nemeth's impasse with Martin Henman continues to rob England of the 6th 10th centre and Spencer Dunkley remains injured.

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Hockey

Sam Torrance posted a second-round three-under-par 69 to move into joint fifth place in the Saracens World Open in Brasilia, Brazil, last night.

Torrance is one of four players – along with the New Zealander Frank Nobilo – on a total of 140, four strokes behind the leader, Miguel Angel Jimenez of Spain, who also

scored a 69 to add to his first-round 67. Jimenez leads by two strokes from the Open champion, John Daly (68), and his fellow Americans Craig Stadler (70) and Fuzzy Zoeller (71).

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RUGBY UNION: Referee criticised as free-flowing Harlequins are frustrated at The Stoop where Tigers sacrifice style for practicality

Leicester opt for the functional

A kindly description of Leicester's rugby is functional and, as they showed last season, functionalism can even win titles. But when it comes to rugby's occasional capacity for uplifting the heart and soul – and no, there has not been too much of it in the Courage Championship this season – they don't.

What is to say they do not do so often enough. The fantastic try with which they had completed the previous defeat of Bristol might just as well have been a mirage for all the relevance it had to their 29-25 win over Harlequins at The Stoop. Clumsy as it may seem to complain when a job has been done, this is nothing like what Leicester's coaches consistently lead us to believe is their design.

The exchanges did not lack stimulation, partly because the score was so close and partly because of the amount of free running Harlequins did, not least Will Carling until he cracked his neck near the end. (Neil Back was not so fortunate: he cracked a rib.)

On the other hand, this was another example of the low skills inherent even at this exalted level of club rugby, as well as the inability of English referees to take the broad view of a match instead of dutifully concentrating on specifics.

One or two Quins were inflamed afterwards at the way Jerry Wallis persistently penalised them in the tackle. More to the point, I should have thought, was the peremptory whistling which so badly stifled Carling until he cracked his neck.

Perhaps the players do not perceive the dichotomy, because afterwards the self-criticism of the acting captain, Rory Underwood, was aimed at Leicester's defence and not their attack. Rory was the lucky one: Harlequins created the conditions not only for their tries by Chris Sheasby, Peter Mensah and Daren O'Leary, but did the same for Underwood when Rob Kitchin's pass intended for Carling was intercepted by the England wing.

Otherwise, it was familiar stuff. A calf injury meant the discarded England No 8, Dean Richards, was absent, but with him Leicester should not be expected to do other than show their way over at a short-range scrum – except that Mick Watson dived in to concede a penalty try before Richards' deputy, Chris Tarbuck, could touch down.

It was not an auspicious day for the abrasive Watson, who received a yellow card for stamping on Aadel Kardooni's leg in



Catch a Tiger by his tail: Harlequins try in vain to stop a Leicester advance on Saturday

Photograph: Peter Jay

STEVE BALE COMMENTARY

missing their chances and being so persistently penalised. It handed the game to John Liley, who is in such sweet kicking form that he handed all five of his penalties, as well as converting both of Leicester's tries.

I suppose it could be argued that, when you have such a prolific provider, the imperative for tries simply does not exist. How else to square the consistently expressed aspiration of Leicester coaches with their team's drab product: The Tigers are changing from lettering to numbering in a fortnight, but will they change their stripes?

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It was not an auspicious day for the abrasive Watson, who received a yellow card for stamping on Aadel Kardooni's leg in

the first half and had to do emergency second-row duty for all of the second after Peter Thresher's departure. But prone as he is to various forms of ill-discipline, he is also a dynamic forward and his burgeoning mobility epitomised how Quins, pack as well as backs, set out to attack.

The contrast was more or less complete. "You come away thinking: 'Is that what the game is about?' And it is. To get two league points against us," said Richardson, a partial witness, suggesting a penalty try or, failing that, a yellow card.

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them £1m a match, could ever play like that. It is alien to the club and alien to their nature."

To see what he means, we have to go back to a period of Harlequins ascendancy during the second half when they moved the ball to left and right, won a ruck or three and were poised for tries when a Tiger, on the logical premise that three points conceded are better than seven, would illicitly launch himself over the ball. Richardson, a partial witness, suggested a penalty try or, failing that, a yellow card.

It was a perverse performance by Challinor who, although the England A outside-half only last year, was

discarded by Quins as soon as David Pears was restored to well-being. In Pears' renewed absence, Challinor alternated between unfamiliar bravura and abject misery. So, in his way, he epitomised Harlequins.

They remained third, and Leicester's prosaic practicality maintains them two points behind Bath and now four ahead of

of Quins. Perhaps they are showing a bath-style capacity for winning when in difficulty, and perhaps people should therefore be less censorious.

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perhaps not. "I thought I guarded my words pretty well," Richardson added, before uttering a derogatory expletive as soon as the tape-recorders had been switched off.

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How Cobblers fell on their feet

Northampton are up and running after their relegation. David Llewellyn saw them defeat London Scottish 54-11

A lot of old cobblers has been spouted this season about playing an open expansive game. At Northampton they don't waste time shooting the breeze, they go out and blast aside their Second Division rivals with the brand of running rugby that so many aspire to but so few manage.

They have come a long way since the fall from the First Division who would not understand their dynamism.

Firstly, all the key players decided to stick with the club and let them bounce straight back. Secondly, the squad returned for pre-season training a month earlier than usual and got themselves fit. Thirdly, masterminded by Ian McGeechan, they worked out how they wanted to play the game. The result is an awesome record, a stunning and entertaining style of play, leadership of the Second Division and massive support.

Generally crowds are around 5,000 – there were 7,500 for the visit of second-placed London Scottish – to watch the Saints march all over their opponents to the tune of eight tries and an

average of 52 points per game, while conceding a steady 11. But this is a far from average club. There are plenty in the First Division who would not understand their dynamism.

They are not where they are simply by being big fish in a little pond. Today's Pilkington Cup fourth-round draw will have top sides keeping their fingers crossed that they avoid being pitched against Northampton, home or away.

It is a very different side from that which was relegated. There has been an injection of verve in the backs – Scott Grayson and Harvey Thorneycroft had already run in first-half tries, then scrum-half Matt Dawson burst through from a 50th-minute tap penalty to himself.

The dam burst right about them. The former Scotland and

British Lions player and coach underlined the major changes that have taken place. "We are far more dynamic," McGeechan explained. "We work harder, we are much fitter and the players are thinking on the right lines. I changed tactically what I wanted us to do and I think everyone is more comfortable with it."

Everyone except their opponents. Throughout a match that could have been a Scotland trial, there were so many of them involved – even one of the touch judges had the sure-touch. Airdrie – the Exiles tried to keep up but eventually they cracked. Grant Sealy and Harvey Thorneycroft had already run in first-half tries, then scrum-half Matt Dawson burst through from a 50th-minute tap penalty to himself.

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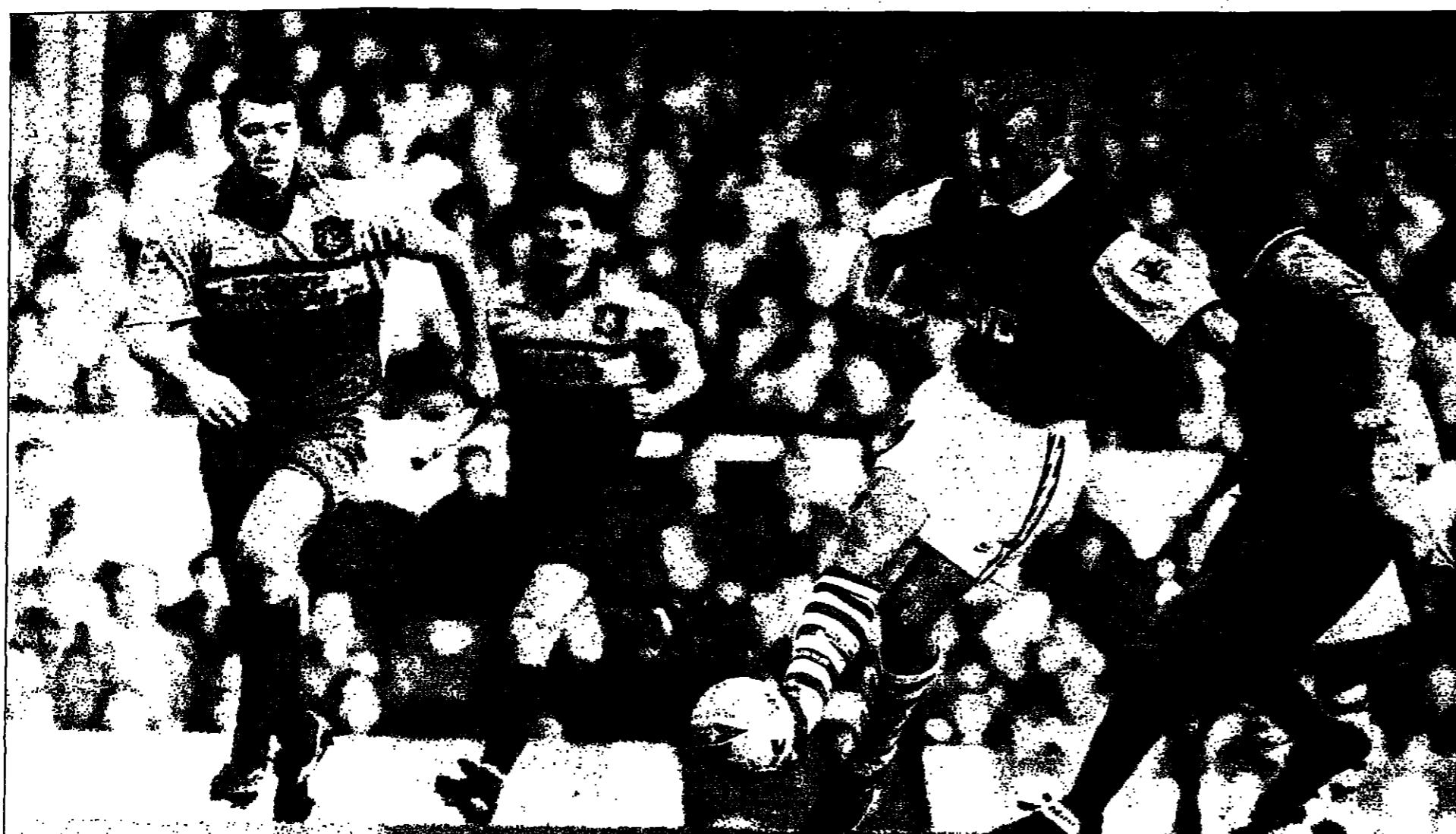
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sport

FOOTBALL: Rioch's team have discovered their own formula for success but Graham's basic philosophy still holds good



Dutch treat: Dennis Bergkamp wends his way between United defenders Gary Pallister and Steve Bruce to the delight of the Highbury crowd

Photograph: Robert Hallam

Bergkamp rallies the working class

“Good players, working hard.” That, said George Graham admiringly, is the secret of football success. That comment, made after Arsenal's defeat by Milan in the SuperCup last spring, came to mind during his former club's match with Manchester United on Saturday.

With an hour gone, and United gradually taking control, Dennis Irwin drove into the Arsenal penalty area. There to make the tackle, and come away with the ball, was Dennis Bergkamp. 27.5m of thoroughly-bred striker, tracking back like a workhorse.

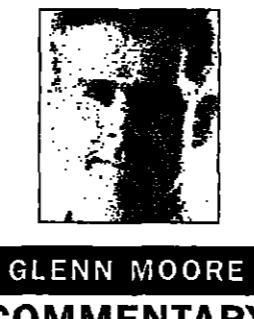
At other times, the crucial intervention came from Glenn Helder, a winger whose first appearances at Highbury suggested he thought his contract had a clause that precluded defending. Graham may be gone from Highbury, but his work ethic is alive and well.

However, this should not be taken to mean that Arsenal are all drudge and no dazzle. The difference between Graham's

Arsenal and Bruce Rioch's is in what they do when they have the ball. The first impulse is no longer to look for Ian Wright and hoof it into space ahead of him, it is to find a red shirt in 20 yards and pass to its owner's feet. This is radical stuff at Highbury, and the supporters love it. In the first half there were several sweeping one-touch moves whose fluency had United chasing shadows.

At the hub of many of these was Bergkamp, who often formed the link between Wright, Paul Merson, and Helder. Arsenal, according to Graham this week, paid over the odds for Bergkamp. Maybe, but you would not have found many subscribing to that view at Highbury on Saturday. Quite a few were happily paving over the odds for fun themselves – large posters of the Dutchman were selling well at £2 outside.

The comparison between Bergkamp and the other £7m striker, Andy Cole, was instructive. While Cole is much more of an all-round player than



GLENN MOORE
COMMENTARY

he was at Newcastle, his touch is not as precise as Bergkamp's and his awareness is less acute. While the Dutchman was spraying perfectly weighted crossfield passes around Highbury, too many of Cole's were hit too heavily, inaccurately, or obviously. He also failed where it counts, in front of goal, missing one particularly good opportunity just before the hour after slick passes by Eric Cantona and Roy Keane had put him clear.

Bergkamp should really be compared with Cantona and Roy Keane had put him clear.

But Bergkamp should really be compared with Cantona, not Cole. The Frenchman had a qui-

et game, but his eye for a pass stood out, especially one 38th-minute ball to Cole that wrong-footed both the Arsenal defence and 34,000 spectators, most of whom were expecting him to spread the ball wide. It was, however, fractionally underhit and Tony Adams was able to block as Cole delayed his shot.

Cantona also missed a late chance to equalise, beautifully put through by Cole who was surprisingly let down by his touch and the commanding David Seaman was able to save.

That left Bergkamp as the only scorer. His seventh Arsenal goal came after he dispensed with the hesitant Irwin before beating Schmeichel with an immaculate finish 15 minutes into the game. Away from the restrictions of the lone role he was given at Internazionale, he looks much happier. His partnership with Wright still has room for improvement, but judging by the success it is already having, that will be a source of pleasure, not frustration, for Rioch.

The change is partly due to personnel, last year's main headbangers – Paul Ince, Mark Hughes and John Jensen – were not among the assembly and Keane, in his last game before his latest suspension, was at his best behaviour. But it was also question of attitude. Both managers desire positive football – it is noticeable that all United's “difficult” players in recent seasons have been imported – their kids compete without the excesses.

That there was only one goal was due to the excellence of the goalkeepers – Peter Schmeichel made a particularly fine save from a diving header by Wright – and some magnificent second-half defending by Arsenal. “They had all the luck,” said a disappointed Alex Ferguson. A debatable point, but even if it was true, Arsenal had earned it.

Goals: Bergkamp (1st 1-0); Arsenal (4-1-1); Seaman; Dixon, Adams, Bowditch, Winterburn, Merson, Paul Merson, Wright, Cantona, Cole, Keane, Schmeichel (79). Substitutes not used: Jensen, Barron (2nd). Newcastle United (4-2-3-1); Schmeichel; G. Neville, Brown, Pilkington, Cole, Ince, Bowditch, Winterburn, Merson, Wright, Cantona, Giggs, Cole. Referee: P Durkin (Pendle).

Substitutes not used: McManaman, Redknapp, Barnes; Rush (McManaman), Watson (Redknapp), Redknapp (Birmingham). Referee: M Reid (Birmingham).

Big Ron suffers big problems

DAVE HADFIELD

Coventry City 2

Tottenham Hotspur 3

At Coventry, you can buy Big Ron mugs and Big Ron T-shirts. It is that merchandise, rather than generic club souvenirs, that the Highfield Road scoreboard advertises. You can even call Big Ron on an 0891 number, although on Saturday's evidence, you could be in for a rather terse conversation.

Although the personality cult is still alive and well, the personality itself is showing the strain. Atkinson has ridden out any number of crises with a quick one-liner and a flash of teeth and gold jewellery, but he has surely never resembled his

namesake, the tight-lipped, ash-faced Neasden manager, Ron Kne, as closely as he did after this defeat.

Coventry have been in worse positions than this later in the season, but the prospect of entering the club's annals as the man who took them down after all manner of unlikely characters had kept them up over the past 20 odd years is siphoning away the familiar bonhomie.

If a tight-lipped, ash-faced man can also be incandescent, then Atkinson was. “We've thrown it away with defending that was nothing short of scandalous,” he scowled, following up with heavy hints that heads would roll and that new faces would be brought in.

The nearest thing to a wise-crack was telling a radio

reporter to “mind your own business” over what he said to his side at half-time.

Although Coventry's marking left much to be desired, however, Atkinson's angry analysis does less than justice to some impressive attacking play from a Tottenham team beginning to re-establish itself as a force.

After going behind to a cleverly made goal by Dion Dublin, Spurs who surrendered a two-goal lead in the Coca-Cola Cup tie here 10 days earlier, scored three – all, in their different ways, finely constructed.

With Chris Armstrong starting to produce some good touches and Ruel Fox looking a Tottenham natural on the right, Teddy Sheringham has the support that he clearly feared he would lack this season and

the side is thoroughly dangerous going forward.

Gerry Francis, although several shades less ash than his counterpart, was less impressed with their defensive work. Their lack of assurance at the back brought Coventry a second goal and gave them the prospect of snatching an equaliser until the very end.

May that would have put a faint smile on Big Ron's mug, even if one of City's grimmer battles still lies ahead.

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JON CULLEY

Manchester City

Bolton Wanderers

0

Let us keep this in perspective. Next May, this result may well represent more than a pinprick on the falling graph of City's season. At least, that is how the red half of Manchester will console themselves after a rare Saturday of exclusively blue celebrations.

But you cannot blame the Maine Road crowd, staff and fans alike, for a little bit of optimism. Only in the makes-no-sense world of football could more than 38,000 people turn up to watch a team with two points from 11 games take on another with five straight away

defeats, but then again, the chance that there would be something to cheer about at last was probably too much to resist.

So they whooped it up. “I'm pleased,” Alan Ball said – understatement was clearly the manager's theme for the day. “I want to win to ease some of the pressure which is beginning to build up on us,” he wrote in his programme notes. Beginning to build up?

Only Francis Lee, the hirer and firer, knows how much pressure Ball is under. Given that he stood by Brian Horton longer than anyone expected, it is probable that the chairman will, for the moment, remain loyal to Ball. November is not a kind month for managers in trouble, and the two-week break between this Premiership round

and the next lends itself ideally to boardroom stock-taking. But if it is tough at present to be Alan Ball, it cannot be much easier to be Nicky Summerbee, who has suffered more than most during City's decline. The 24-year-old winger so resembles his famous father that since the moment he arrived expensively from Swindon 16 months ago, he has been expected somehow to turn back the clock to the 1960s.

In September, Ball dropped him “for his own good” and Saturday's decisive goal, therefore, is a mark of personal triumph. His confidence had drained away, Ball said, but there was a need, also, to apply some boot to backside.

Indeed, there was no hint of frail confidence at all in the way

the goal was scored, from the ball juggling by Niall Quinn that launched it, through George Kinkladze's expertly delivered pass to Summerbee's cracking finish from a yard inside the penalty area.

Had Bolton, without a point away from home, not been so lacking in purpose in the first half, they might have taken three here. In the second half, chastised and reorganised with a striker removed and five in midfield, they looked the better side.

Goal: Summerbee (11). 1-0. Newcastle City (4-2-3-1); Cole, Barton, Peacock, Howey, Beardsley, Gedepe (75), Bowditch, Winterburn, Merson (79). Substitutes not used: Setters, Smith, igi. Liverpool (5-3-2); James, R. Jones, Wright, Scales, Babu, Harkness, McManaman, Redknapp, Barnes; Rush (McManaman), Watson (Redknapp). Substitutes not used: McManaman, Redknapp (Birmingham). Referee: M Reid (Birmingham).

Summerbee earns Ball reprieve

that was the weekend that was

by Jon Culley

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Arrivederci Silenzi?

Here's a story no one in Nottingham believes – that the Forest team's Christmas party will see Andrea Silenzi among the guests.

On the basis that the first Italian to leave Serie A for the Premier League did not come to keep the bench warm, City Ground fans suspect that the £1.8m ex-Torino striker will not stand much longer for playing under-study to £2,000,000 Southend export Jason Lee. Forest play Wimborne tonight after renewed speculation over Silenzi's future, namely that the seven-day Italian transfer “window”, currently open, will allow him to escape. Rumour-mongers suggest Parma, Internazionale, Genoa and Torino are poised.

The 29-year-old Italian says: “I am not homesick, I love Nottingham,” he says. But after one start in 15 games, it does not look too good...

Red card
BARRY FRY

... the Birmingham City manager, who in a stadium as volatile as St Andrews, ought to know better than to indulge in his habitually excessive touchline celebrations when his side score. Saturday's ugly scenes after the Millwall game could hardly have been blamed on him, but his contribution cannot have helped.

PREMIER XI

TEAM OF THE WEEKEND

BISHOP ALEXANDER

DODDS SOTON

WRIGHT LIVERPOOL

BOWDILL ARSENAL

WINTERBURN ARSENAL

SHERRIDAN MIDDLEBROUGH

SHERRIDAN EVERTON

WIGGLESWORTH SHEFFIELD

BERKAMP ARSENAL

TORKE ASTON VILLA

Starting out at Gresley

Having gone from bottom to top in his life, Gary Birles has no worries about taking the long route. Hence the one-time carpet fitter who became a £1.25m Manchester United star was happy to make his managerial debut on Saturday with Gresley Rovers in the Beamer Premier League.

Birles had been out of football five years after arthritics ended his playing career. He accepted the chance on Friday to be No 2 to his old Grimsby teammate Paul Fletcher at Gresley, and kicked off with a 2-1 win at Chelmsford. “It's difficult to get a foot on the ladder these days, so I'm very excited,” the 39-year-old former England international said.

Not that will be taking too much for granted. He will not, for instance, be giving up his day job, selling seafood to the catering trade.

Take a bow
TERRY VENABLES

... for suggesting that the £100m from the National Lottery earmarked for whichever site is chosen as the national stadium would be better spent on play areas for children. This is possibly the best tactical idea the England coach has yet had.

Just as John Major has tacitly supported the nuclear antics of Jacques Chirac, so that footballing gentleman, sometime national captain and fast-food PR man, David Platt, offers the hand of detente to a misunderstood Frenchman who has a tendency to reach critical mass himself.

The Sunday Mirror, however, reckons the striker about to leave Ewood is the Shire, with Tottenham hot-pot and Arsenal and Manchester United watching.

Brian Deane could go from Leeds to Aston Villa, according to the Mirror, though Brian Little's £1.5m bid may depend on Graham Rixton's sale to Blackburn after a hitch over the young midfielder's medical. Ossie Ardiles, the former Spurs manager dismissed by Madrid side Guadalajara, is back in Britain with ambitions to run his own club, according to the Sunday Express, which puts forward Spurs team-mate Ray Clemence as a possible target.

Rumours

Fact and fiction from the Sunday papers

Newcastle United are ready to pay

a British record fee of £1.0m to

create the partnership Terry Venables

does not want by signing

Alan Shearer to play alongside

Les Ferdinand in Kevin Keegan's

side, according to the Mail on Sunday.

The report claims Blackburn

agreed verbally to allow

Shearer to leave if he became disenchanted and that Newcastle,

with money banked from the

sale of Ruel Fox, more to come when

Keegan sells full-back Marc Hotter

and commercial sales boomer,

will find the fee no problem.

